

# SOME HOPE AND SOME DESPAIR

ISSUE 6 - SOMETIME 2004 - 3 DOLLARS



Annie **ANXIETY**

**FLUX** of Pink Indians

David **KEREKES**

**MINORITY** Blues Band

Honey Bear Records 2003 Tour Diary

# SOME HOPE AND SOME DESPAIR 6

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Once again, it took me months longer than expected to get this issue together. Been busy. Since the last one, J Church have released a split LP with Storm the Tower, Toured the US twice and Japan once, and put together a full length worth of new material for a Japanese only CD. We've been busy.

At the same time, I put out the first of the J Church live LPs on Honey Bear Records. I had been selling CDRs of some of our past shows through our website. I did about 100 of each and got tired. I'll probably start it up again if I ever get a new burner. In the meantime, each one is coming out as a limited edition (20 only!) LP. The first was "You Don't Have To Say 'No'" recorded live in Cleveland from ages ago. People seem pretty happy with it which I'm glad about. The next one is coming out as soon as I get the vinyl back from the pressing plant (which is half way around the world). It's live at Gilman Street on the eve of our first US tour with Unwound and Lync.

I've also finally got together the covers and everything for "Beautiful Frenzy". You might remember that it's the documentary that I've been talking about forever about the Ex from Holland. They are one of my top ten inspirations and the documentary is brilliant. Right now, it's VHS only. But with any luck I'll get to do a DVD some day. I hope to do more videos as well with a couple of pro-shot Cringer shows maybe coming out. I dunno.

It's all, of course, a terrific hassle as I'm dead broke. First of all, I work at a video store as a clerk. So you know what kind of money I make. I'm here in Texas which makes the standard of living lower which is a bummer for me in the long run even if my rent is cut in half. Plus, I lost so much stuff in the fire, I'm still digging myself out of debt. I haven't been able to replace some of the basics much less label necessities like a CD burner or a good computer. Add to all that the well-known fact that I'm just not very good with money.

I'm in a hole. But it's okay. The few things I get out on my label are cool and sought after. I got to go back to Japan and I'm going to Europe. The new band is great and most people like the new album better than anything we've done before. Plus, I'm almost done with the book I've been toiling over on anarcho punk\* with an end just barely in sight. I've also finally started a store at Cafe Press like I've been talking about for years. It's a little expensive, but if you wanna check out some stuff I'm selling, it's [www.cafeshops.com/honeybear](http://www.cafeshops.com/honeybear). Liberty's busting her dumb-ass UT undergrad students for cheating! Life is good.

Lance

\* - For those interested, I've decided the only way to make it work is to put more serious limitations on what I write about. First of all, it's just gonna cover England. Its too hard finding all the Scottish, Irish, Welsh, bands much less the ones from the States, Iceland, whatever. Secondly, it will start with the beginning of Crass and end with the Thatcher On Acid, Danbert Nobacon, Political Asylum tour of '89. Going into the '90s is a book on its own and in many ways a very different story.



*Me in front of the baseball tribute outside of Maxwell's in Hoboken.*

## STRAIGHT TO YOU

All the towers of ivory are crumbling  
And the swallows have sharpened their beaks  
This is the time of our great undoing  
This is the time that I'll come running

Straight to you  
For I am captured  
Straight to you  
For I am captured  
One more time

The light in our window is fading  
The candle gutters on the ledge  
Well now sorrow, it comes a-stealing  
And I'll cry, girl, but I'll come a-running

Straight to you  
For I am captured  
Straight to you  
For I am captured  
Once again

Gone are the days of rainbows  
Gone are the nights of swinging from the stars  
For the sea will swallow up the mountains  
And the sky will throw thunderbolts and sparks

Straight at you  
But I'll come a-running  
Straight to you  
But I'll come a-running  
One more time

Heaven has denied us its kingdom  
The saints are drunk howling at the moon  
The chariots of angels are colliding  
Well, I'll run, babe, but I'll come running

Straight to you  
For I am captured  
Straight to you  
For I am captured  
One more time

## MILESTONES

Lots of death since the last issue. I'm sure you've all read as much as you can stand about poor Elliott Smith. I'll just add that I was surprised how many friends who never knew the guy (myself included) felt really sad by this. We all must have thought that his music was our private little thing. But he affected a lot of people.

### Edward Said (1935-2003)

For those of you who have read any of my rants about the Palestinian cause, you'll know what a huge impact the writings of Edward Said has had on me. A post-structuralist leftist, his secular analysis of the conflict in Palestine was consistently lucid and well-researched. Along with Chomsky, I've always thought of him as one of the few great American thinkers of our time.

Probably his most famous book, "Orientalism", best sums this up calling the "orient" a Western concept and way of dealing with a region. "Orientalism" therefore is a means of both stereotyping and defining with Western political intent. Therefore, "orientalism" is a critical part of colonialism. In contemporary terms, it's modern colonial depictions of Arab culture as backwards and menacing. While the book is used in academic resources, it's well-worth reading to anyone. While this may seem like a cliché, it seems more relevant today than in the past decade.

Beyond his public speaking and his work as an essayist (most often dealing with the never-ending nightmare of Israeli human rights violations) he was both a music critic and performer, known both for his opera review and piano concerts.

He had been struggling with leukemia when he published his autobiography, "Out of Place" in 1999.

### George Plimpton (1927-2003)

It's funny that I've read more than one obituary for the great George Plimpton comparing him to Zelig. Intellectual, literary critic and best-selling sports writer, he was founder and for 50 years co-editor of the Paris Review. Dedicated the creative writing, the literary magazine featured essential interviews with Hemmingway, Nabokov, Iris Murdoch and more.

In the '50s he was largely responsible with helping make sports writing a legitimate journalistic field by becoming a regular contributor to Sports Illustrated. His famous sports writing included sparring with then light-heavyweight champion Archie Moore for three rounds, pitching during major league exhibition games and posing as a rookie quarterback at summer training camp with the Detroit Lions.

A lifetime progressive and Democrat, he was apparently at the White House in 1961 for the famous fight between Robert



Kennedy and Gore Vidal. Swiping Vidal's hand from Jackie Kennedy's back, the Senator said, "Fuck off, buddy boy". Vidal responded, "You fuck off, too."

In 1973, he relocated the Paris Review to New York where his offices became renowned for debauched, albeit intellectual, alcoholic parties.

Sporadically, Plimpton had done some acting since the late '60s. But in 1981, he starred in one of my favorite movies of all time, "Reds", as the sleazy Horace Wigham.

### Anita Mui (1963-2003)

As many of you may already know, Anita Mui passed away recently after her struggle with cervical cancer. It really came as a shock as she announced that she had cancer just a few months before. Having just turned 40, it really seems sad to me especially with her film career starting to pick up again in 2002.

For those less familiar, she was known as the Madonna of Hong Kong, which wasn't really accurate. Equally known as a great actress and singer, she won awards in both categories. Having partially retired from her singing career in the early '90s, she made a series of incredibly successful films in one of the biggest markets.

Her earliest breakthrough film role was in "Rouge" released in 1987. The romantic drama set in a Chinese brothel in the '30s paired her up Leslie Cheung, another great of Asian cinema recently coming to a tragic fate (he committed suicide in April of 2003). The film won her Best Actress awards in the Hong Kong Film Awards, the Golden Horse Film Festival and the Asia-Pacific Film Festival.

But the roles I loved her for were a little less "sophisticated". I loved her as Wonder Woman in "The Heroic Trio" and "Executioners" along side Michelle Yeoh and Maggie Cheung. I loved her with Stephen Chow in the hilarious "Fight Back To School III" parodying "Basic Instinct". She's incredible as the ass-kicking detective from Hong Kong with Jet Li in "My Father Is A Hero".

I haven't had the chance to see any of her films since her comeback in 2001. But her last film, 2002's "July Rhapsody" is supposed to be available soon and I'm definitely looking forward to one last look at one of the most beautiful actresses of all time.

### FILMOGRAPHY

- Sensational Pair, The (1983)
- Mad, Mad 83 (1983)
- Let's Make Laugh (1983)
- Mad Mad 1997 (1983)
- Behind the Yellow Line (1984)
- Musical Singer (1985)
- Lucky Diamond (1985)
- Young Cops (1985)
- Dancing Warrior (1985)

Why Why Tell Me Why (1986)  
 Last Song in Paris (1986)  
 100 Ways to Murder Your Wife (1986)  
 Inspector Chocolate (1986)  
 Scared Stiff (1987)  
 Happy Bigamist (1987)  
 Trouble Couples (1987)  
 Rouge (1988)  
 One Husband too Many (1988)  
 Greatest Lover (1988)  
 Three Wishes (1988)  
 Mr. Canton and Lady Rose (1989)  
 Better Tomorrow III, A (1989)  
 Kawashima Yoshiko (1990)  
 Fortune Code, The (1990)  
 Shanghai Shanghai (1990)  
 Saviour of the Soul (1991)  
 Au Revoir, Mon Amour (1991)  
 Banquet, The (1991)

Top Bet, The (1991)  
 Justice, My Foot (1992)  
 Moon Warriors, The (1992)  
 Heroic Trio, The (1993)  
 Fight Back To School III (1993)  
 Executioners (1993)  
 Magic Crane, The (1993)  
 Mad Monk, The (1993)  
 Drunken Master II (1994)  
 Rumble in the Bronx (1995)  
 My Father is a Hero (1995)  
 Twinkle Twinkle Lucky Star (1996)  
 Who's the Woman, Who's the Man (1996)  
 Eighteen Springs (1997)  
 Wu Yen (2001)  
 Midnight Fly (2001)  
 Dance of a dream (2001)  
 Let's Sing Along (2001)  
 July Rhapsody (2002)



**We're all on a train with the  
same destination: death.**  
*Cocteau*

### Sarah Jacobson (1971–2004)

It breaks my heart to even write this. Sarah Jacobson died a couple of days before my birthday after a long battle with cancer. Sarah was a DIY, punk rock, filmmaker mostly known for the crazy short film "I Was A Teenage Serial Killer" and "Mary Jane's Not A Virgin Anymore". She was a good friend and a really supportive person whether it was showing me how to edit something at her house or giving me a ride home from a show when I was in no shape to sort myself out.

She was a really rambunctious renegade when she needed to be and when you're making little indie flicks for no money, that's most of the time. I remember she would drive me crazy on occasion 'cos there was always something that she was just way too excited about that she had to explain to me in full detail.

Once I helped her get my roommates to let her shoot part of "Mary Jane" on my roof. The shoot went really late and they were making a bunch of noise in the wee hours of a work night. My roommates were pissed and never forgave her. But she was willing to take that chance for her film. She had character in abundance.

The last time I saw her, she was visiting Austin with Greta Snider and a few others for some sort of film festival. I was really busy with work and didn't have the time to hang out with her as much as I would have liked. I'm missing that now.

### FILMOGRAPHY

I Was A Teenage Serial Killer (1993)  
 Mary Jane's Not A Virgin Anymore (1997)

JULY 23<sup>rd</sup> – AUSTIN, TX (the footbridge)

Originally we were gonna be in Denton on the 23<sup>rd</sup> for our kick off show of the tour. But problems with scheduling didn't allow for it. Rather than just blow it off and drive straight to Phoenix, we decided to act on an idea that had been floating around for months if not years.

Some time ago, Ben Webster had said that a friend of his was walking across the footbridge at South Lamar and noticed that there were outlets for electricity. She told Ben she thought someone should go up and play there. Considering friends of ours had been doing free shows outside of the BART stations in San Francisco for years now, that idea didn't seem so far fetched. DIY punk has always had a history of shows like this. I can remember playing in Laundromats, rooftops, coffee shops (Muddy Waters in San Francisco was NOT ready for a Jawbreaker / J Church show), etc. I've been to two separate secret shows at different Kinko's locations.

Part of the fun of DIY shows is that the idea can often overshadow the seemingly practical stuff. We couldn't get a great PA out there. Obviously, we weren't gonna charge any money so we wouldn't get that elusive gas money to get to our next show. We really had no practical way of even promoting the show.

But thanks to punk's low standards of PA quality, J Church's lackadaisical attitude towards getting paid and the promotional power of Friendster, the show was quite a success. In the end, the line-up was J Church, Storm the Tower and Attack Formation (Webster's band). Each band would play two songs and switch off, the idea being that if the cops showed and shut us down it would increase the possibility of each band getting to play a little. We did this round robin until each band got three turns to play. I guess it's pretty quiet out there on the bridge. No cops. No complaints. It was magic playing under the starry Austin sky.

JULY 24<sup>th</sup> – drive

Long ass drive to Phoenix... We wound up arriving really early in the morning and having a hell of a time finding a motel to stay at. Our guitarist David (who also makes up the entire line-up of DFI) brought his wife, Rosa Maria, and baby, Eva, along. I think we were all a little surprised that the one year old didn't really cry the whole drive. Here's what I learned on the drive: because my seat is behind RM and Eva's, I'm gonna really have to get used to watching breastfeeding every day for the next month.

JULY 25<sup>th</sup> – PHOENIX, AZ (Modified)

Didn't wanna do the Nile this time around and it's just as well as it seems they've gone out of business. I don't really know what I think of that Cory guy. Lot's of bad stories. So this time I stuck with what I know and contacted my old friend Kimber who is one of the first people I ever met in Arizona. She's been running a record shop called Stinkweeds for years and back in the old days when I would

be out visiting the guys from Hippycore fanzine, I'd spend a lot of time there perusing 7"s. Turns out she's got a lot of new cool stuff go-

ing on a big part of which is Modified. Part of Phoenix's new drag of cool little art gallery's, her space doubles between that and a place for bands to play. A nice small room with a low stage, this is pretty much exactly what a band like us wants at every venue.

The show itself was fine. As is the curse with our band, a bulk of the crowd didn't come inside until we played. I started to get the feeling that some of these shows might really suck for DFI and Storm the Tower. For whatever reason that's sort of par for the

course with us. It's no big deal if you're playing a big show. But when the sum total of the audience is 100 something people (or less even) and half of them stay outside until the last band...

I was worried it was gonna be a really rusty show after the long drive. But I guess we were all sort of busting to do something after sitting for so long. It was also great seeing old friends like Kimber who looks like she's still in her 20's and the guys in Financial Panther (they played first) who turned out to be old friends in a new band.

JULY 26<sup>th</sup> – SAN DIEGO,

CA (Che Café)

Okay, this is a fucking summer tour. We arrive in time to find out that everyone we know is going to see Sensefield who are playing a huge all ages show about 5 minutes from where we're playing. There's also something cool going on at the Casbah or some bar. Yes, it's summer and summer tours suck. We never do them. In fact, after a decade this is our first summer tour in the states ever. Now I remember why we don't do them: the campuses are empty and there are 20 times as many bands to compete with on the road.

Our shows at the Che range from packed to empty. Got to play with Vena Cava who I had heard cool things about. More rock and less pop punk than had been described to me and that's a good thing. This time, the show started pretty bleak and turned out okay. When we started our set, there were literally about 10 people. But about six songs in, it was like the punk bus showed up and all these dudes came running in. Brett's (STT drummer) family was at the



show. At least his Dad's side. Some good came of this evening. Hey, I'm just glad our little dog and pony show didn't ruin Sensefield's night of fun.

JULY 27<sup>th</sup> – ANAHEIM, CA  
(Chain Reaction)

I guess when the promoter tells you over the phone that he doesn't think anyone is gonna be there, you're not really expecting too much. Beyond that I really don't know what I was thinking setting up this show. OC has never been our friend and the fact that this club doesn't really advertise outside of there (they don't run ads in the LA Weekly) pretty much doomed us. Martin from Giant Robot was my only friend in the LA area that new about the show and that was because I e-mailed him about it. At the end of the night, the guy that did the show said that there were 75 people. But it sure didn't feel like it. Something about the size of the room made it feel like tumbleweeds were blowing across the stage. To make matters worse, Sensefield and the Kills were playing different shows in the LA area. Pretty much anyone that might have made the drive to see us went to one of those shows instead.

But I shouldn't really be making excuses. Let's face it, we don't have a new album out and our last record came out 4 years ago. We don't have a record label supporting or promoting this tour. Plus, we've got three bands on the road together canceling most chances of a local draw. Quite possibly the most important factor is that the last time we toured there weren't that many bands that sounded like us. Now we pretend that we're so different because our band is ideological and not just making music. We think we're real smart. But most people don't really care and now that M2 and the majors are clogged with bands doing something similar but with \$100,000 production values, why would anyone care about us?

JULY 28<sup>th</sup> – off

Really, I wanted to have this day off so we could hang a little in LA and then spend half of the day in SF. Of course, that didn't happen as everybody decided they wanted to stay at different places last night meaning we didn't leave LA until late afternoon. I did get to go by the

Giant Robot stores and spend a wad of cash. I got to hang a little at the office and see Eric if only for a few minutes. Martin also hooked me up with a bunch of back issues which is cool since I'd lost my complete collection in the fire (anyone got an extra copy of #3 lying around?).



bands. Right before we went on a bunch of my old friends came in including Kate, Rob and Gordon who I hadn't seen in years. Made me feel a little homesick for the Bay.

Our set was strangely relaxing. I really wish we had more time. It was nice catching up with Mike Millett and Kim McGee (our old roadie). I hadn't seen Kim since before her sister-in-law died. We did a bunch of catching up. Then we loaded up and drove to Portland.



a bullet belt, I remembered that Brad is one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet and that pretty much everyone from the Tragedy/From

JULY 29<sup>th</sup> – SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Bottom of the Hill)

Back in the Bay and I'm feeling like a normal person again. We all spent the night at the Maximum house and I got to spend a little quality time with Arwen and Thorn. He came with us to Lucky Creation, which is one of my favorite restaurants in the world (one of the better all fake meat Chinese restaurants... Really feels like Hong Kong in there for some reason...). Before the show, there is a little reunion party for former Epicenter Zone volunteers that I unfortunately missed in the chaos of trying to organize three

JULY 30<sup>th</sup> – PORTLAND, OR (house party)

Despite a more nervous-than-usual overnight drive to Portland (this is just a few nights after the Exploding Hearts tragedy), we arrived tired but generally unscathed. Baby screaming productivity was limited to one hour making the drive even sort of pleasant at times. Our Arwen from MRR came with us to hook up with her boy. Hoping this would be our chance to catch up, we both promptly fell asleep in the van waking up with fairy dust and dreams of hardcore in our eyes. First stop would be our crash pad of the evening where the guys from From Ashes Rise live. While I at first felt a little awkward for not having

Ashes Rise/Deaththreat/Severed Head world is really nice.

The show is sort of a kick off for the Portland Zine Convention. It's Wednesday, but there are already a lot of zine folks in town for the event. David Hayes and Paul Curran are also at the party, which is nice. But it makes me marvel that, with all of us and Arwen talking, the different generations of MRR shitworkers all in one spot. If I were a total nerd, I'd say that it was like a Dr. Who episode...

As is the case with most house parties, it's a blast with people going off. It's nice to know that our band can be a bridge between the bullet belt punks and the backpack kids.

JULY 31<sup>st</sup> – SEATTLE, WA (2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Pizza) Trying to get nine people to do anything on time is hard. But we're the worst. We make it to the venue right around the time when Storm the Tower should be finishing. We set up real quick and they get to do a few songs. We tear through a tired but enjoyable set and David gets to do 5 minutes of DFI at the end. This is hardly the optimal way of doing things. But in a weird way it was a relief. Touring is all about "hurry up and wait". You rush to get somewhere. You load-in. You maybe do a soundcheck. Then you wait around for hours to play. Especially for a tour like this, it's a lot of waiting around for me and Ben (our bass player). Just waiting for our turn to do our thing. So it's sort of nice once in a while to run in and do it. Just kick the shit out, you know?

Later that night we go bar hopping. Well, we hop between two bars, one of which is being tended by Kim from the Fastbacks and it's probably the first time I've heard the Jets in a bar in the States. A girl comes up to me and asks if I'm in J Church. Hey, she says she would have come to see us if she knew we were playing. This is something you have to get used to hearing on a DIY tour.

AUGUST 1<sup>st</sup> – VANCOUVER, BC (The Underwear Farm)

Crossing the border is always an anxious affair with me. I remember being detained and having major hassles from the man on the Monsula tour almost resulting in our arrest. With J Church it's often easier as we often have a nice looking rental van and my artificially charming personality. This time it was a bonus as we were touring with a baby and hit the jackpot getting a dowdy middle-aged Cannuck at immigration.

Seven bands tonight and the door to the hall has a big warning poster about SARS. Sweet. It's all a blur as the heat descends, exhaustion becomes pronounced and a big plate of hot vegetarian somosas start beating me into submission.

I really did enjoy Subtract To Zero as that kind of noisefuck often comes across great live. Especially if you're just worn down enough (be it from inner or outer forces) to let the fuzz carry you out of the stinky little club. A little Thrones-y meets hemp clothes if you know what I mean. Dug the brutal hardcore of fellow recyclers Living Under Lies though I think it was their bass player that said he got into J Church because his mom was a fan. I am 100 years old.

AUGUST 2<sup>nd</sup> – BOISE, ID (JD's)

Yeah, well, it looks a lot closer on the map. Fuck us, were we late for this show. We got there so late, most of the crowd had split and

The Rah Bras and Hella had already played and were packing up. Oh well, played to the stragglers, got paid, and was reminded by a show in Canada a few years ago where we took the stage about an hour after Elevator to Hell got done.

AUGUST 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> – DRIVE

Idaho, Montana, North Dakota. They're all just words to you. To me, they're miles of home made mad libs, inappropriate camera use and a surprisingly limited amount of sex stories for such a big group of guys. I never thought I could acclimate to daylong drives. But I have.



AUGUST 5<sup>th</sup> – FARGO, ND (VFW Hall)

Got to our buddy Chris's house a day early and he let us hang out. Everyone crammed in the house and watched a two-hour long Girls Gone Wild infomercial (that's what happens after a two day long drive) thinking that if they watched long enough they might see a nipple. Jug and I decided to crash in the van, as it wasn't as disgustingly hot as the house only to find that mosquitoes do know how to get in through van windows.

The show was what it was. You get up. You play. People clap. You pack up. You leave. Nice people. Nice hall. Really nice posters.

Later that night, Jug and I drank some beer and watched the Aurora Borealis. Two hours later, Jug had a nocturnal emission while sleeping in the van much to my chagrin. I swear it's all true. Is there really any reason why I would make that up?

AUGUST 6<sup>th</sup> – MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Triple Rock)

No shit, this is one of the nicest venues I've ever been to in my life. This is what happens when bands get their shit together and start a cool club. Great room. Great stage. Great sound. Alright! Shit! I get it already! It's a cool place.

Heads and Bodies played tonight and they're a really odd little band. I mean that in a good way. There's always been this weird little strain of DIY punk that makes the twin cities so special. Dogfight, Jonestown, you know, Heads and Bodies fit in with those other drastically underrated bands. Bunch of cute boys giving it their angst-riddled all with a cute girl blasting away on a clarinet. It's cool.

Crashed at their place and partied next door is some sort of makeshift game room that kind of looked like a barn or something. Had a good time and finally got to hear Against Me for the first time. I didn't really get it. But everyone seems to love 'em so I'll give them another chance when I've got more time.

AUGUST 7<sup>th</sup> – CHICAGO, IL (Fireside Bowl)

The Fireside Bowl is perfect to me. It always happens at that point in the tour where I need a pick-me-up. It's the bar. It just feels like I'm at home. The tour is halfway done and I'm delirious. I need that beer at the bar while the sun is just starting to set.

So I've come to expect good things from this place. Next time, my expectations will even be higher as everything was going right tonight. I got to hang out with Liberty's brother Adam, I got to see Carolyn and Robert who drove over with Janelle who's tour imploded. Shit, I was so happy to see all those people. All folks I care

a great deal about and hadn't seen in a while. I especially miss touring with Carolyn. Hanging out with her was one of the best parts of the tour with Avail and Propagandhi.

Tonight Calvary also played who I'd been interested in seeing for some time. I don't think they all live in the same city, so it was cool that they got it together to play this show. I like Calvary and this is where life gets confusing for me and I really, really don't want to get into this discussion... But are they really what you would call "emo"? I keep hearing people call them that and that's not what I would expect from a band related to Current and Charles Bronson. When you say "emo" do you mean screaming hardcore or indie rock type stuff? I just don't get it.

#### AUGUST 8<sup>th</sup> – COLUMBUS, OH (The Legion)

This house party was sort of ass. Probably the worst show of the tour. Probably one of our worst shows on the road ever. But it was fun hanging out with the nice people that lived in the house and getting some pizza. Whatever happened to Sudsy Malone's?

#### AUGUST 9<sup>th</sup> – PITTSBURGH, PA (Mr. Roboto)

I'm really glad that J Church is starting to get out of that weird little cloistered world we had been trapped in. I know that we probably aren't their cup of tea. But it was cool hanging out with people from Caustic Christ. I'm a big fan of Aus Rotten and not a lot of people know that.

Mr. Roboto is a storefront converted into a small venue. It's great. I wish every city had something like this. As soon as we arrive, some kid hands me a list with 30 song titles on it, all J Church songs he wants to hear. By now, people that come to see us are used to hear me saying "we don't know that one anymore". And I thought we went out of our way to learn some interesting old ones for this tour like "Hate So Real". The older punkers here appreciated our Wire cover more than in most other places.

Got to see our man Ronndon. He and his special lady friend came out with us after the show for some Indian food along with some cats from Caustic Christ and Intense Youth.

#### AUGUST 10<sup>th</sup> – PHILADELPHIA, PA (Calvary Church)

Ran into Blake on the street today while getting a slice. That was a little weird. I felt like I should have been more prepared. I mean, I really don't remember the last time I saw the guy. It was certainly before Jawbreaker split. At some point, J Church and Jawbreaker stopped playing together for reasons too complicated and personal to go into. But when Blake moved back east I really just totally lost touch with him.

I love Philadelphia. I think it's my favorite city on the East Coast. I think I love it more than New York. I really do. I got to hang out with Liberty who was back home visiting the folks for the summer. Hadn't seen her in almost two months and that's more than breaking point for me.

The Calvary Church is a great old place in the neighborhood where a lot of our friends live including Mike from Kill The Man who set up this show. They're some of the funniest people I know and it's a real shame they split. True If Destroyed played this show with us like they did in Pittsburgh. They're sort of a political post-punk type

thing, which I know is the vaguest, lamest thing I can say. I hope they're still out there doing stuff. I haven't really heard from 99% of the bands we played with since getting back to Austin.

#### AUGUST 11<sup>th</sup> – BOSTON, MA (Middle East Café)

This was the fourth or fifth time we've played the Middle East. We weren't really even on the bill, so it's no shock that the show was a dud. We had a day off and got added to this screamo show at the last minute. Buncha fashion kids playing blast beats and screaming away. It's funny, I guess. The people at the club were as nice as ever. Sensefield and Hey Mercedes were playing downstairs but they might as well have been miles away.

#### AUGUST 12<sup>th</sup> – HOBOKEN, NJ (Maxwell's)

All this time and this is our first show at Maxwell's. I don't know why we've skipped it in the past. We've always wound up playing odd little places along the way. With Pier Platters gone, I've never found much use in Hoboken lately.

Was great to finally play with the wonderful Plungers. Their Ramones-y, garage-y, punk rock was a breath of fresh air. Blasting through potential hit after potential hit, they were probably the best band we played with on the whole tour. I especially love their cover of Jackie DeShannon's "Breakaway" (though I mostly know it from Tracy Ullman's awesome record).

Spent the night in NYC near Tompkin's at JT's place. I don't exactly remember. But I wanna say it was on the 40<sup>th</sup> floor with no elevator or AC. Ah, New York. I love the challenge. Nowhere else do you feel like you're living and dying at the same time.

#### AUGUST 13<sup>th</sup> – NEW YORK CITY, NY (North Six)

We got pretty lost on our way to this club so we were all pretty pissed off by the time we loaded out. Still, it's a beautiful space. One thing is for sure; we played some nice looking venues on this tour. Maybe the music world is getting better in some ways... Worse in others I suppose.

Went and got a slice with Charles Maggio before the show. All I wanna eat is pizza when I'm here. I love this fucking city and if I ever move here I swear I'll put on a hundred pounds. I love the pizza. I love the Indian food. I love the eggplant parmesan. Got some cool discs off of

him too. Gern Bland is a really underrated label. I mean, in the beginning he was releasing some really innovative hardcore records by Rorschach, Merel and Native Nod that were very imaginative for a generally conservative musical style. Then he put out classic records from Garden Variety, Chisel, the Van Pelt, etc. Now he's got some of the most interesting post-punk / Pigbag / Gang of Four type stuff going with Radio 4, Watchers, etc.

Second night with the Plungers and I find out that their singer / guitarist is pregnant. No point in asking them to do more dates with us later in the year. Still, it was great to even do these shows with them. It's nice when you find bands that you really relate to. Hopefully we'll be doing a split single with them this year.

After the show, Chris took off the stay with his cousin who plays in Les Savy Fav, another band I love. I went off with Liberty's soon-



to-be sister-in-law Sonja to stay on the Upper West Side. Got a little bit of late night food followed by a dead sleep.

AUGUST 14<sup>th</sup> – WASHINGTON, DC (St. Aloysius Church)  
Had a nice breakfast back near JT's at one of my favorite places to eat, Odessa. I love those potato pancakes and the fried sauerkraut and mushroom pierogies. But can someone explain to me how gravy and cheese make regular fries into "disco fries"?

We picked up former Austinite, David, now of Cause for Applause and hit the road for DC. About an hour out of town we start hearing reports of a blackout and how the whole city has shut down. Turns out, we left town minutes before everything went to hell. A little luck is better than none at all I guess.

This show was literally in a church. I mean, we've played many church basements. But this was right there in the church. This was sort of weird for me. Got to catch up with Mark Anderson, which was really great. I hadn't seen him in years and years. Turns out St. Aloysius is the church he actually attends. Things sure are different in DC.

This show was a low-key DIY affair done by some AK Press type kids. I don't remember the name of the first band. All girls fighting through their set and fighting with their gear and coming up with something cool and fascinating in the process. You don't have to win the battle to win the war.

AUGUST 15<sup>th</sup> – BALTIMORE, MD (Talking Head Club)

Yeah, tensions starting to run a little high especially with the Storm the Tower camp. It's none of my business, so I mostly keep far away from it. This whole tour is mostly a test drive of the new J Church line-up for me, so it's all fun. No real expectations. And, hey, Reptilian is a great store. Atomic Books is pretty cool too. What have I got to complain about?

The local paper here had a great little write up of us. I wish I had a copy of it. It was really nice. Nice picture from the Arizona show. It's good to see pictures of this line-up in print.

Don't know if it was the article or the fact that we hadn't played here in forever or what, but this was easily one of the best shows of the tour. Lots of cool kids with nothing to do. Incidentally, I played some of the worst pool I've ever played in my life here.

AUGUST 16<sup>th</sup> – CHAPEL HILL, NC (Go Room)

Got some cheap cool records right around the corner from the club. Picked up some Mingus sides plus Hanoi Rocks and some other hardcore records. I dunno. This is the first time we've played here in almost a decade when it wasn't the Cat's Cradle. Sort of a relief. That place always seemed like a big empty cave when we played there.



God dammit! I'm such an idiot! I can't remember the name of the band we played with tonight. They were cool folks. You know, they were the band that did the bicycle tour. What the hell were they called? They were great though.

This was also the first of three shows with Dade County Resistance who are a pretty solid indie / pop punk band with one of the guys from Guyana Punch Line. I guess he's sort of the East Coast Chris Pfeffer.

Got to talk with Jon from Superchunk for a while tonight. Nice to talk to someone who I haven't been staring at in the van for the past month. Jon is one of those timeless guys who have got more energy than I can even handle. He's one of the most Muppet-like people I've ever met.

AUGUST 17<sup>th</sup> – ATLANTA, GA (Echo Lounge)



Fucking traffic! It was a mess getting down to Atlanta. To make matters worse, these shitbirds with "Bush for President" bumper stickers kept driving half out of their lane to prevent people from driving in the median. Chris decided to take control of the situation and drove down the middle forcing all these little fuck-faces off of the road. It was hilarious watching these uptight assholes panic and freak out. There's nothing as satisfying as getting flipped off by a pissed off Republican.

Nope, Atlanta ain't the kind of place we can pull off when school isn't in session. A big room with 50 people in it. Still, I had a good time for some reason. I just started to realize that I wasn't at home and I wasn't at work.

AUGUST 18<sup>th</sup> – COLUMBIA, SC (New Brookland Tavern)

Last show with Dade County Resistance and it's their hometown. Have we ever really had a great show in South Carolina? I mean, there are always cool people and it's sort of fun. But we've been here, what, six or seven times now? I can't remember a great show.

A couple of kids drove for like eight hours to see us. They got wasted on vodka and Red Bull before the show even started. Last thing I remember, they were passed out drunk with one of them having puked on the other ones head. I felt bad for them. But, shit, it was funny as hell

and hopefully it will be one of those stories they'll be able to tell all of their friends.

AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup> – GAINESVILLE, FL (CG Coffeehouse)

I love Gainesville. Part of it is because I always feel like we're on the homestretch once we get here. But also because it seems like an irrationally large number of our friends are from this burg. Do we have Var to blame?

Our old pal Jason (late of Unitas, former Discount/Hot Water Music roadie) set this up for us. He's one of those guys that I'm friends with that we just pick up wherever we left off no matter how many years it's been, no matter what continent we're on. One of the good guys... Why did Unitas split up?

Did I mention Var? Yeah, I hadn't seen that guy in years and years. Like me and David Hayes and Charles Maggio and a few others, he's one of the guys who has stuck it out and is still doing something cool. I guess it's presumptuous of me to think I'm doing something cool. But what I mean is he's still sticking with his guns and at the same time rolling with the changes and not becoming a nostalgia guy. No Idea is a consistently interesting label that is now an incredible distro. It was cool to finally see his new digs and pick up some records along the way. So much good shit on that label. I fucking love that band Bitchin'!

Got to play with True North tonight. It was a real treat. I mean, I love that band anyway. But they were working out new stuff at this show. Really interesting. I really like that drummer's technique. There's a lot of personality in this band's playing.

AUGUST 20<sup>th</sup> - ORLANDO, FL (Will's Pub)

The next two Florida shows were sort of duds. Sparsely attended. Will's Pub was probably the worst as we've had such great shows here in the past (not the club, but the city). Some new kid, pop punk, poseur band opened up with some dork rocking out and taking photos. It was silly New Found

Glory type bunk. Someone told me that they hit our van as they were leaving the club and just sped off. I don't even remember what those fakers were called.

AUGUST 21<sup>st</sup> – PENSACOLA, FL (Handle Bar)

Most of the group went off to hang out at the beach. Fuck the beach! Jug and I went off in search of Chinese food and we fucking found it! This whole town was completely dead and empty as we walked around, so it was no shock that the show was sort of blah.

I did get to see Jessy who I actually first met years ago when she was in a band called Vanbuilderass and living in Gainesville. Last time I saw her was when her band Subtonix were crashing at my place in Austin. I really hope she starts to play music again. She's so interesting and smart. I know the Subtonix couldn't last. But if

they had, the world would be a much different place. Certainly the music world...

AUGUST 22<sup>nd</sup> – HOUSTON, TX (Fat Cat's AKA Mary Jane's)

Drove all night to get back to the lone star state. Sleeping time over at Mark from the Storm the Tower's family house. Wow, his dad is nuts. I mean, he's nice. But, wow, I have new respect for Mark for surviving. Nice house. Sleep time.

Fat Cat's is the end of Storm the Tower how we originally knew them. Tensions erupt and Mark walks offstage mid-set. Chris breaks his guitar. It's chaos. They probably don't wanna hear this, but it made for a really exciting show.

These last two shows are with a cool Houston band called the Fighting Type. I really dig these guys. They've been mining the Merge/Superchunk/indie veins for some time and coming up with some interesting stuff. It's catchy and the singer has a cool voice, which is more than you can usually hope for with indie rock.

I actually really enjoyed our set. Those last two shows were kind of burners for me. So it was nice to play a somewhat normal set to a more appreciative audience. I don't know why I've always liked playing Houston. I don't know why we've always had fun shows there.

HONEY BEAR RECORDS TOUR  
2003  
D.F.I.  
Storm The Tower  
J Church  
Chris, Ben, David, Jug,  
Mark, Brett, Rosa Maria,  
Eva and Lance all in one  
van for a long, hot, sum-  
mer month. Thanx to all  
who helped...

Mark quit and everyone gets along again. In fact, both J Church and Storm the Tower have played with Mark's new band, the amazing Signal Lost, on more than one occasion. They just "signed" to Prank and will soon bury us all.

It was probably one of the better Austin shows for DFI. I'm not sure if DFI had ever played Emo's before this one. With a friendly audience, it was probably his most relaxed performance.

We were okay. In my mind, I was already at home and in bed. It was good to see the folks from Vulcan Video if not just for a little while after we got done playing. The show actually went late and for some reason we did a super, super long set ending after 2:00 AM. Don't believe the hype. The last show of tour is almost always anti-climactic.

*Little Annie Anxiety was one of the only Americans to be closely involved with the Crass camp back during the early days of anarcho-punk. Appealing to their more experimental and poetic tendencies, her use of religious imagery and beat mythology could easily be seen as an extension of daunting black and white poster art of these hippy punk anarchists. As you can imagine, you can't expect to get a normal or boring interview with Annie.*

Lance - Okay, first of all, what do you prefer to be known as these days? Annie Anxiety? Annie Anxiety Bandz? Little Annie?

Annie - Annie works, I work under the name of little Annie. It don't really matter what you call me, just call...

Lance - How did you get the name Annie Anxiety? How long have you been known by that name?

Annie - I saw an ad in the Daily News, "Do you suffer from anxiety". It was a joke that stuck.

Lance - Your biography mentions that you left home at 14 and supported yourself as an exotic dancer, professional gambler, icon painter and face model and that this

work took you around Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil and Montreal. Could you expand a little on what exactly you were doing?

Annie - I was being fabulous.

Lance - Do you think that your life at that time or the fact that you left home so young had an influence on you becoming an artist? Or did you already know back then what you wanted to do?

Annie - I had no qualifications. I was born with an insatiable hunger for color, excitement and experience. The first movie I remember seeing is the wizard of Oz. I still relate. I'm still striving to live in Technicolor. Creating is an extension of that quest. I think I entered the field by default. I entered the workforce in recession with no skills, nor diploma, nor money. I was too ignorant to conceive the concept of failure. I'm an adventurer by nature, hence my impatience to dive into the world. Creation is an act of blind faith. When I was a kid, I made 'books'. The theme was always the same. "There once was a little girl who ran away to Japan, china, Spain, etc." I never planned it nor thought about it, I still don't. It just happened.

Lance - What exactly were the Asexuals all about? What year was that? Was this before punk rock?

Annie - The Asexuals was an ever-changing improvised line-up. We happened around 77 -78.

Lance - The band attracted Andy Warhol and Richard Bernstein. What was your relationship with the New York art world at the time?

Annie - I'd crash openings in order to eat.

Lance - How did you wind up in London? What made you decide to move there from New York?

Annie - I met Steve from Crass on my stoop in New York around 2am one morning. I was starting to tire of the incestuous nature of the scene in New York at the time. I was only intending to visit for a few weeks. Who knew?

Lance - Had you been there before? Did you know many people there?

Annie - No. The only people I knew were Crass. Chrysis St. Laurent gave me some names and addresses of people to look up but I never did.

Lance - How did you meet the Crass folks? Were you already familiar with their records?

Annie - I never had heard of Crass, before meeting Steve.

Lance - Had you played any music with other people before meeting the Crass

Annie - Yes, in New York. I first sang professionally at the age of 16 at Max's Kansas City. The Blessed had asked me to support them, so I grabbed my poems and rustled up some guys from the Bronx. It probably sounded awful, but I was hooked.

Lance - What was it that drew you to them? Did you live with them out in the country?

Annie - They were sincere, fresh and funny. Yes, I lived in Dial House with them for a while

Lance - Did you have any interest in anarchist politics before then?

Annie - My very being was anarchic, and political. I was a lone woman who refused to know her place. By the time I had met Crass

I had a few nights in jail under my belt, been labeled a 'commie' in the sixth grade, had a wrongful arrest by a psychotic transit cop and ended up in Bellevue, dealt with Welfare, food stamps etc, met Julian Bond at age twelve, worked the clubs, spent a night in a Cheyenne, Wyoming youth care, etc, etc, the list is endless. So I was aware of what happens if you bump horns with the status quo. I hadn't read any doctrines if that's

what you mean. Like art, I was politicized by my refusal to celebrate mediocrity. I choose my battles more carefully these days. In the end I found some who call themselves Anarchists to be as spiritually vacant as those of some who call themselves Republicans. I think true activism comes from love and passion, not didactic tomes.

Lance - Had you done any performances live before you met Crass? Did you perform with them before you recorded with them?

Annie - Yes, Yes.

Lance - How do you reflect on your relationship with Crass? What are some of your memories of that time?

Annie - I learned a lot from them. I learned the just do it ethic. I was very young when I met them. I had never been out of the US before. I was a puppy, so it was all pretty fascinating to me at the time. The house was gorgeous, all hand made from hard work. I was terrified by the cows on the next-door farm, though I sang and danced for them when I got drunk. I had never seen homemade bread, nor so many books, nor seen a house full of people who worked so hard. My memories are of vibrant conversations, a lot of dumb fun, of and endless stream of faces passing through, new ways, new words, new ideas, a new aesthetic. I was bewildered a lot of the time, but it was pretty inspiring.

Lance - How did it come about that you would do a record for them? Who suggested it?

Annie - Penny Rimbaud had seen my poetry, they had already recorded 'Shaved Women' which I had wrote, and Penny suggested we do a single.

Lance - How did "Barbed Wire Halo" come together? How was it recorded? Did you put together all of the tape loops?

Annie - Penny spliced the loops together, and I spliced the words. It was disco cut-ups; Bill Burroughs meets Gloria Gaynor.

Lance - What are the lyrics all about? Is there a connection between "Hello Horror" and "Cyanide Tears"?

Annie - Cyanide Tears was a juxtaposition of Jim Jones/ and my ongoing love affair with New York. I was thinking about the sultriness and seductiveness of hot summer nights in New York, drinking Coco Rico, and how Jim Jones seduced a thousand people into the jungle to drink cyanide laced Kool Aid. It's all seduction.

Lance - What were the graphics on the record about? Were they tattoos or something?

Annie - It was from a Japanese woodcut.



Lance - Explain "Horror is the denominator, but life is the question".

Annie - That as humans we tend to get wrapped up in all kinds a garbage, people kill over garbage. I don't think the world or God for that matter cares about our nonsense.

Lance - How did people react to that record when it was released?

Annie - The avant-garde, jazz-bos, etc dug it. It sold well, got good press. I don't quite know how to gauge other reactions.

Lance - Did you do much live performance at the time? What were the crowds like?

Annie - I performed endlessly. I think a lot of Crass's audiences took a while to come around. It threatened people at first. They came around. The Europeans were quicker on the mark.

Lance - What was it like on the road with Crass? Was it stressful? How did you tour?

Annie - It was grueling. To keep the door price down, we traveled by van for weeks on end, sleeping on people's floors, living on marmite sandwiches. I wasn't stressed. I like marmite. It was like being in the army. It was fun. I love touring.

Lance - What were the audiences like on a Crass tour? How did they treat you? Did you feel connected to the anarcho punk scene? Did you relate to any of the other bands or artists involved?

Annie - I felt connected to a whole lotta individuals. I've never been one for scenes as such.

Lance - Your next record came out in 1984 called "Soul Possession". It's more "musical" (for lack of a better term). How would you describe the music on that record?

Annie - Dance music for the end of the world.

Lance - What does the title mean to you? What were some of the things you were trying to express with that record?

Annie - The words speak for themselves.

Lance - What was the meaning behind "Viet Not Mine, El Salvador Yours"? "Girlie girlie, meet me round the corner, in half an hour"... What's that all about?

Annie - Its poetry.

Lance - What was it like recording that record?

Annie - It was one of the most educational times in my life. We'd do marathon sessions that lasted days. Working on my own and other On-U Sound artists' stuff. People like Bim Sherman, African Head Charge, Mark Stewart, Mikey Dread, Lee Perry, Shara Nelson, Akabu, Ashanti Roy, and countless others would pass thru and lay down their part. It was a lot of fun, and I learned a tremendous amount.

Lance - What was the cover art all about for that record?

Annie - It was art, that's all.

Lance - What was the response like to it?

Annie - It did well.

Lance - Who is Kishi?

Annie - Kishi is a genius producer, photographer, musician.

Lance - You continued working with Kishi and became Annie Anxiety Bandez. Together you released "As I Lie In Your Arms" and "Jackamo" on One Little Indian. First of all, what were you trying to achieve musically during this period?

Annie - Only to do the best work I can at the time, as always.

Lance - How was "As I Lie In Your Arms" selected to be the single?

Annie - It was the obvious single.

Lance - What was "One Mourning" about? Do you feel that Motown has played a big part in your life?

Annie - I've been surrounded all my life by a Motown soundtrack. Its one of my favorite labels, and Marvin Gaye is one of my favorite artists.

Lance - What was "Hier Encore" about and why was that the next single?

Annie - It was written by Charles Asnavour, so you'll have to ask him.

Lance - In 1990 you released "Sugarbowl" on Atco. How did this one off record come about? Was there ever talk of a full length with the label?

Annie - I was signed by the president of Atco.

Lance - I really love "Diamonds Made Of Glass". It kind of reminds me of "Broken English" era Marianne Faithful. What were you going for musically with this record?

Annie - Again, just trying to do my best at that time, and honest hopefully.

Lance - On the record you thank God. Do you think of yourself as a religious person?

Annie - A spiritual person. I'm happiest when I'm God centered.

Lance - Two years later you released "Short And Sweet" and you were Little Annie. What were you doing between records?

Annie - Painting and writing.

Lance - Why was "I Think Of You" selected to be the first single?

Annie - It was the obvious single.

Lance - How did you wind up on On-U Sound?

Annie - They asked me to be.

Lance - How was it decided that "Bless Those" be released as a 10"?

Annie - On-U Sound decided, I thought it was a wise choice.

Lance - Who was doing your artwork at that time? There's a bit of a 4AD feel to it.

Annie - Coneyl Jay did the artwork. We used big letters. 4ad always used those tiny ones

Lance - How did "In Dread With Little Annie" come about? Was it just something to tide the fans over until the next record?

Annie - No, I did an EP, because I wanted to. I like the concept of EPs.

Lance - What made you choose to do a Lee Hazelwood cover?

Annie - It's a great song.

Lance - Are you still doing music from this record live?

Annie - Occasionally.

Lance - How do you reflect on your various collaborations? Missing Brazilians? Current 93? Coil? Wolfgang Press?

Annie - I've had the most wonderful fortune to collaborate with the most talented artists. Collaborating on this level is like making a baby. I am proud of all of my children, and still love their fathers dearly!

Lance - Could you talk a little bit about your writing? I think you've got two or three books published now? What are they all about?

Annie - You'll have to read them. To explain it here would be to rewrite them.

Lance - Could you talk a bit about your painting? How would you describe what you're doing? I've seen it described as "outsider art". But that doesn't seem accurate as you had met Warhol and were possibly at least slightly influenced by Gee.

Annie - I met Warhol and know Gee. Neither of them taught me to paint. Outsider art to me means, untrained, which I am. My painting is influenced by religious paintings, retablos, iconography, the clashing colors of China Town and the New York skyline.

Lance - What kind of music do you listen to now? Do you ever listen to the old punk stuff?

Annie - A lot of Gospel, Jazz, soul, Sinatra.

Lance - How do you reflect on your time with Crass? Are you in touch with any of them at all?

Annie - We've recently been in touch

Lance - Why did you end up moving back to New York?

Annie - Because its beautiful.

Lance - How do you reflect on the old anarcho punk scene? Do you think it had some real value or was it all naïve?

Annie - Of course it had value.

Lance - Do you still feel connected to any of those political ideas from Crass and the anarcho scene?

Annie - I still hold on to the values my family gave me, to question, stand up for what you believe in, Be yourself, try to do the right thing, work hard, and don't take yourself too seriously

*Flux of Pink Indians were one of the most famous of the punk bands associated with UK peace punk scene of the late '70s and early '80s. Politically active on many levels, the band were also especially creative releasing some of the most challenging records of the time from the raw punk of "Strive To Survive" to the abstract noise of "The Fucking Cunts Treat Us Like Pricks" to the highly produced dance of "Uncarved Block". This interview was done by singer Colin and first guitarist Kevin.*

**Lance - How did the Epileptics form? How did you folks all meet up? Where are you from?**

Colin - The Epileptics came from a small town 30 miles North of London, called Bishop's Stortford. We started as a three-piece: Clive Griffiths on guitar, me on vocals and Richard Coveney on boxes (we couldn't afford a drum kit). Later I bought a bass but couldn't sing and play at the same time. We were writing songs and rehearsing in Clive's bedroom, then a friend from school, Derek Birkett, used to hang out with us and in the end (he wasn't too keen) started to play bass. Generally the whole thing was a bit of a racket; it was April 1978 and punk had been

and gone (or so it seemed) and we were mucking about singing songs about knickers on washing lines, that sort of thing. When we bumped into Crass in August '78 we changed the songs to more p.c. kind of stuff!

Kevin - I joined the Epileptics in September '78 after hearing that their guitarist was leaving the band in order to start a college course. I think they already knew of me.

Incidentally, at this time Derek (Birkett) had fairly long hair, and wore cowboy boots - Colin always made him take them off when we were rehearsing!

**Lance - How did you get into punk rock? What was your first exposure to it?**

Colin - Derek had been at the 100 Club Sex Pistols gig in '76, and we didn't believe him when he told us what he had seen. I knew of him during school, and only Richard, Derek and I were into punk, so he came knocking at my door to see if I was going to see the Jam playing in Cambridge (1977).

Kevin - I had seen reviews of the Sex Pistols and Clash, etc., in the music papers of the time and didn't really know what to make of them - I wasn't particularly impressed by what I'd read, and didn't give them a lot of thought until I was watching a TV program called "So It Goes" in August 1976. The Pistols performed "Anarchy" and while a few of my friends thought they were garbage, me and another friend thought they were great. We decided to form a band a month or so later. When I tried to buy "Anarchy" in November '76, no shops were stocking it, so I bought The Damned's "New Rose" instead.

**Lance - What made you want to start a band? Had you been in any bands previous to the Epileptics? Did any of the members have any musical background?**

Colin - None of us (The Epileptics) had been in bands before, but by the summer of '78 Kev (Hunter) had joined us on guitar so he sharpened everything up. He'd been in local bands (one was called the Darlex). I suppose meeting Paul McCullum of Puncture at my first job gave me the idea of being in a band, that's if you ignore the previous four years I 'played' a tennis racquet to Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin.

Kevin - I'd had a guitar for a couple of years, but could only play chords and not solos, so I had thought that I didn't really stand a chance of being in a band. I was listening mostly to heavy rock stuff

from the early '70s, especially Black Sabbath, and the Pink Fairies who were a biker band. One of their B-sides, "The Snake" really influenced my rhythmic chord style (check the record out!). After seeing the Pistols on TV, I thought that I could certainly handle playing just rhythm, and had my first rehearsal with the newly-formed band in January 1977. My first band was called various things: Dead City at first, then The Antichrist - after the first line of "Anarchy In The UK" - and finally The Darlex, a corrupt spelling of the arch-enemies of Dr. Who.

**Lance - What were the early gigs like? What bands do you think were your inspiration back then?**

Colin - The early gigs were chaotic with mic stands and monitors falling off the stage. Our second ever gig was with Crass in London and we didn't know what a soundcheck was - after three songs, with only Crass in the club listening to us, and us thinking due to their lack of response that they hated it. Then they said, "OK,

that sounds fine, we'll open the doors at 8!" Our sound at the time was a mix of the Banshees and Wire.

Kevin - The early Epileptics gigs were pretty messy - it took us all a while to gel, but we seemed to get things together fairly rap-

idly once we got to rehearse every week. Personally, I didn't buy a lot of punk singles as I didn't want to end up copying any particular riffs or style, but I listened to John Peel's radio program whenever it was on. Things I really did like during late '77 and early '78 (and subsequently bought) included "Shadow"/"Love Story" by The Lurkers, and certainly Richard Hell & The Voidoids "Blank Generation" album - it wasn't as predictable as a lot of the UK punk records. I always hated the commercial punk/new wave stuff by The Vibrators, Rezillos, etc., as it sounded like bastardized glam rock or plastic rock 'n' roll to me.

**Lance - Were there any demo recordings before the two 7"s?**

Colin - A demo was recorded at a Romford studio - really just for us to hear our own songs; it was great (looking back) in not even thinking for a minute that we'd send the tape to a record label, it just didn't exist in our minds then.

Kevin - In March '79 the Epileptics recorded a demo tape (nine tracks, some of which later appeared on Overground's "System Rejects" CD); the live tracks that made up the "Last Bus To Debden" EP came from a complete gig that was recorded in September '79, although the EP wasn't issued until 1981.

**Lance - What was Stortbeat Records all about? What other bands did they release?**

Colin - Stortbeat was a local label that absolutely hated us at first - they were a bit '1978 punk/new wave/pop' - we were just a bunch of no-hoppers to them.

Kevin - Stortbeat Records were a small local label that had released a couple of singles and one album by a mod/beat band called the Gangsters, a single by The Sods, and some other things.

**Lance - How would you characterize the "1970s" 7"? What was it like recording it?**

Colin - We went into the studio to record the "1970s" EP not knowing or agreeing what songs to do - so it just kind of happened. It was the first time in a proper studio so I'm afraid every knob got used on the tracks, especially the ADT (auto double tracking) button - it makes everything sound like there's 50 of everything. "Less is more" wasn't so fashionable back then.

Kevin - The "1970s" EP was great fun to do, as it was only the second time we'd been into a proper recording studio (the demo was recorded at a very small studio in someone's wooden shed at

# FLUX OF PINK INDIANS

the bottom of an urban garden). We had intended to make either "I've Got A Target On My Back" or "Can't Stand Sitting Down" as the A-side, or lead track, but the two guys from Stortbeat convinced us that "1970s" was the best one, and I suppose they were right.

**Lance - At what point did you start Spiderleg? Was the whole band involved in the label?**

Colin - Spiderleg was started by myself; Stortbeat had disappeared and our EP had been the only record that had sold for them. Later one of their friends got me the metalwork for our EP so I pressed up 1000 copies with a photocopied sleeve and sold them at other people's gigs and at the 'Boy' shop in London. John Peel played the EP loads of times, which was fun.

**Lance - How would you characterize "Last Bus To Debden"? What were those songs all about?**

Colin - "Last Bus To Debden" was just an excuse to release some Epileptics stuff after we'd become Flux Of Pink Indians.

Kevin - The songs on "Last Bus To Debden" had been part of the Epileptics' set for 9 or 10 months when the gig was recorded, and they were all Colin's lyrics and ideas, and my riffs.

**Lance - How were the records received by critics and the public? Do you feel that the band was pretty well known in the punk scene at the time?**

Colin - Can't remember it ever getting reviewed, and punk had basically finished by the time we came along – hence the song "Two Years Too Late".

Kevin - John Peel played "1970s" a few times when it was released, and we thought it sounded pretty good on the radio - in fact I thought that it might scrape into the lower reaches of the UK charts! What I didn't realize was that Stortbeat only pressed up 1000 copies, and they sold fairly quickly, and that was that. We had only played a few London gigs by the time the single came out, so I don't think we were known by anyone much outside a 25-mile radius of where we lived.

**Lance - What were some of the bands that you were playing with at the time?**

Colin - We played with Crass mainly, which exposed us to London, etc. Other local bands we'd played with were The Sinyx, U-Samples, Urban Decay. A good scene was beginning to form in our area but it only ever seemed to exist for ourselves. Going beyond a ten mile radius from our town to play gigs didn't really cross our minds.

Kevin - Apart from Crass and the Poison Girls, we had supported The Passions (a poppy sort of New Wave group who later had a UK hit with "I'm In Love With A German Film Star"), the Klingons (whose vocalist Sarah Osborne subsequently sang with Repetition, then Allez Allez, and married Glen Gregory from Heaven 17!) and a few others, but mostly we played with local bands the Spelling Missteaks (who also had a single out on Stortbeat), the Spasms, the Eratics, and the U-Samples.

**Lance - At what point did you decide to become Flux Of Pink Indians? Was there a time when Flux was still doing Epileptics songs? Was it true that there was an in-between stage when you had to change the name to Epi-X because of the British Epilepsy Association?**

Colin - Kev and Richard decided to leave; we were changing from a '77 kind of punk band of naughty, fun songs to a political machine influenced by Crass – not punk at all, looking back - Crass defined their own agenda, not one I think was around in '76/'77. Me and Derek were then joined by Sid (from Rubella Ballet) and Neil and Andy (of the U-Samples); our whole sound changed to a chunky, heavy drum-based thing. We had become Epi-X earlier because we had realized that The Epileptics as a name might offend some people – some people deserve to be offended, people suffering from epilepsy don't.

Kevin - In early 1979 (we had already been banned from our local venue as Colin had kicked a monitor off the stage during their first gig) we were sent a letter (via Crass) from the British Epilepsy Association, accusing us of "ill-conceited jocularity" so we shortened our name to Epi-X for a while. We also played an impromptu gig as The Acid Experience. We reverted back to the Epileptics, but once we'd signed the contract with Stortbeat and recorded the EP tracks, they said they wouldn't release the single under that name,

which is why it came out originally as by The Licks - a name that was decided upon on the spur of the moment, and we all hated it. We never did any gigs as The Licks.

**Lance - I know you're sick to death of some of these questions... But what's the meaning behind the name? Who thought up the name and what was the meaning behind it?**

Colin - I thought of the name Flux Of Pink Indians. Steve of Crass had got me into native American Indian stuff and the name basically meant 'a group of pink-skinned Indian sympathizers'.

**Lance - How did you become exposed to Crass and that scene? Hadn't you known them back in the Epileptics days?**

Colin - We bumped into Crass in 1978 when they were playing at a local club (Triad) that we always went to. At first we thought they looked like a bunch like Nazis so we blanked them. After the gig we chatted to them, liked what they were saying and arranged a gig with them at the Basement in London. After that we lost touch until I bumped into Annie Anxiety (a friend of theirs) at an Adverts gig – I was wearing one of Crass badges and when she returned to the States she mentioned to them that she'd met me – so they then got back in contact with us.

Kevin - We first saw Crass at a local gig back in August 1978, when they played support to some band I can't remember; I wasn't a member of the Epileptics at the time, although I knew Colin and Rich vaguely. When we saw their symbol on a huge backdrop we thought it was some kind of neo-Nazi sign, and when they came on all dressed in black, I was convinced that they must be a fascist group. However, after the first couple of songs I was absolutely blown away by them, and started chatting to a couple of the band after their set. They seemed like really friendly people, and they told us some of what they were about.

**Lance - Had you always been political? How did you come across anarchist politics?**

Colin - No, not at all – Derek, I guess might have been, but for me it was meeting Crass that opened up the whole thing. I'm sure they changed a lot of peoples' minds and lives. (Understatement!)

Kevin - I didn't really have strong political feelings up until that time although I was kind of interested in socialist ideas. The awareness of anarchist politics came primarily from Crass and that whole scene.

**Lance - How did you become interested in animal rights and vegetarianism? Were there any other bands around at the time that inspired songs like "Sick Butchers"?**

Colin - Derek was a veggie, so I got the idea from him. To be honest I wasn't one when I wrote "Sick Butchers" but does it matter? I remember playing a gig at the 100 Club and sneaking round the back with a beef burger. I was only 17; give me a break!

Kevin - I can't remember how I came across animal rights issues, although my girlfriend had been a vegetarian since she was eight years old, and as I didn't really like the taste of meat anyway (but had always had to eat it as a kid) it was easy for me to give it up totally, which I did in early 1979. I can't say anything about the inspiration for "Sick Butchers" as I wasn't a member of Flux at the time, but I had always liked a track called "Sheep" by the UK folk-rock band The Strawbs; it was on their 1971 album "From The Witchwood", and is a really pro-animals song done over a menacing backing. Here are the lyrics...

July the fourth in the market town  
Farmers have come from miles around,  
Bringing their wives and children  
A farmer stands with his youngest son  
Watching the sheep driven from their pen  
The Slaughterhouse is waiting  
Look they're turning back, they're frightened, dogs are snapping at their heels,  
Jumping on each others' backs, hear their squeals...  
The young boy stands looking quite dismayed - how can they know they're just animals?  
"Pull yourself together!" - the farmer tells him to look inside -  
Row after row of raw carcasses, their blood runs in the gutter.  
Listen to their silly bleating, farmer beats them with his stick

Milling by the open door, don't be sick.  
The young boy takes a look around, see people watching blankly  
And he pities them, for they, too, look like sheep  
And he tells himself when he grows up, when he becomes a  
farmer  
He will just plant seeds of love and he will harvest peace.  
© Dave Cousins 1971

**Lance - What were the early Flux Of Pink Indians gigs like? What kinds of bands were you playing with at the start?**  
Colin - Early Flux gigs were good. A lot of them were in London and Crass' "Feeding Of the 5000" had just come out, so a whole new punk scene was starting, totally unrelated to the old one.

**Lance - Who was in the band in 1981 when you released "Neu Smell" on Crass Records?**

Colin - Derek, Sid, Andy, Neil and I. The song "Tube Disasters" had been written by me and Kev, but he wasn't mentioned on the sleeve notes.

Kevin - At the time that "Neu Smell" was recorded and released, the line up was: Colin - vocals, Derek - bass, Andy Smith - guitar, Neil Puncher - guitar, and Sid Attion - drums.

**Lance - What led to the recording of that record? How did you wind up doing the single for Crass? Was there ever any talk of an Epileptics single on Crass Records?**

Colin - Crass called us on the morning of the day we were about to record the "1970s" EP for Stortbeat; we'd signed a two-year 'deal' the night before, so had to wait before we could do a single on Crass. So yes, there would have been an Epileptics single on Crass in 1979 – things could have ended up very differently, whatever that means!

**Lance - What did you think of the other stuff on Crass Records at the time? Did you feel like you related to these bands?**

Colin - We were playing with bands on Crass' label so we felt we were involved in some kind of movement that bore no relation to the outside world of 'reality' or 'music'.

**Lance - That record had what might be the most famous Flux song in "Tube Disaster". What were you trying to express in that song? Was it a feeling of alienation and frustration? Was it a morbid curio?**

Colin - The lyrics of "Tube Disasters" had been written by me back in 1978 while we were in our cheeky punky 'let's offend people' mode; it has no political message at all. Derek has tried in the past to give it some big deep meaning, but really it was just the scribblings of a 16-year-old working in London and using the tube a lot.

Kevin - Colin wrote the lyrics for "Tube Disaster" and I put the chords to it at a rehearsal in late '78; as far as I can remember he was inspired by a really bad train crash at Moorgate, London a few years earlier, and in all honesty I think he was being provocative about the whole thing. Later on, the lyrics were changed slightly to give it a different angle (vicarious thrills). We first played it at an Epileptics gig near the end of '78, and right from the start it was a popular number - probably the only Epileptics song to have survived all the way thru Flux's live set.

**Lance - Do you think that being one of the big bands at the time put pressure on you to maintain a certain image? What was it like interacting between band members? I read an interview done by Mick Sinclair where he says twice the band members started fighting amongst each other...**

Colin - Err - I suppose image did exist although you wouldn't admit it back then, but I guess you endlessly search for new issue to write/protest about. If you're not careful, finding an issue to complain about could become more important than finding a solution to the problem. The Mick Sinclair interview was done in a pub half an hour before doing our set, and included Bambi and Simon who had just joined us and, to their credit, had some of their own ideas, so the odd argument on/off camera took place - no problem!

Kevin - When I rejoined the band in 1982 I was aware of their increasing popularity and status, but I didn't feel any pressure, as I had known them for a few years by that time.

**Lance - Why did you decide to release a record for the Subhumans before you released your own LP? You had released three EPs by them before you had released your LP... How did you know them? What other bands were you close to at the time?**

Colin - We had gigged with the Subhumans and they had stuff ready to release. We were still getting things together after Sid, Neil, and Andy had left. The label had come together partly by accident with the obtaining of the metal works for the "1970s" EP, it wasn't started just to release our own stuff, it was first come, first served.

**Lance - There are many symbols and logos that people associate with Flux Of Pink Indians. What were some of the ideas behind the bird and the skull and who came up with them?**

Colin - The skull symbolized (for me) punk, even after death; to be honest I was a bit of a biker at the time, so it looked a bit like some Hell's Angels logo. The bird didn't mean anything, it was just my own design based on native American symbols.

**Lance - What other bands did you release on the label? I'm only really sure of Flux, The Subhumans, The System and Kronstadt Uprising. Were you trying to cover some of the areas that Crass were unable to?**

Kevin - Although I wasn't involved with Spiderleg, I asked Colin about the releases, and he couldn't remember! However, he knew that Flux's "Taking A Liberty" was the last record that was issued on the label, so I recently dug around and compiled a complete discography of all sixteen releases: see end of questions.

**Lance - The first Flux Of Pink Indians LP didn't come out until 1982. What was recording that record like? Where was it recorded?**

Colin - The best five days of my life (up 'til then), everything about it was great – we knew the songs well and gave it 100% effort. It was recorded at Southern Studios in North London, where Crass ran their label from, and where Spiderleg was beginning to be based.

Kevin - I think we all enjoyed recording "Strive" - I certainly did! We spent four days (27th to 30th) in May 1982 recording the tracks that comprised the album - and most of the first day was spent by Penny setting up Martin's drums! We stayed at Southern where we were recording, and spent every waking hour on the tracks during those four days. We literally crashed out when we couldn't do any more, then got back to it once we'd woken up. We went back into the studio to put on some back vocals and do some overdubs on June 15th.

**Lance - One of the elements of that record that I always thought was so interesting was the guitars feeding back between all of the songs. It made the record more urgent. Were any of the songs done in one take? Do you feel like the record captured what the band were about live?**

Colin - No, no takes in one! Southern was a 24-track studio and as is the nature of these things, each instrument is recorded individually at a time – mainly for clarity (believe it or not!), but I guess you lose some spontaneity doing it that way. The album was exactly as we were live.

Kevin - It was Penny's idea to link the tracks with my guitar feedback, and I spent two fairly long periods just making my guitar howl and squeal (I completely fucked up my amp by doing this) and this was then edited into the final mix. Apart from the way I feel about making my guitar sound really thin and tinny I must say that he did a good job with the album as a whole. Incidentally, the guitar sound on the intro to "They Lie We Die" was a compromise; I had originally wanted to do it on a 12-string acoustic guitar, just to vary the sound, but we couldn't find anywhere to hire a guitar at the time that we needed to. The other members of Flux had been quite willing for me to use an acoustic on it, as we all felt to some degree that most anarcho bands were just making the same old sound and seemed scared of broadening the musical scope. I think that a couple of tracks were laid down in one take (I'm pretty sure that "Progress" was one of them), but we then overdubbed more layers of guitars and vocals - even extra cymbal crashes on some. The record was

an basically a large chunk of our live set at the time, but our stage sound was always a bit muddy - usually because we hired cheap PA systems. We were definitely very tight as a band, as were gigging frequently, and I think it showed. I don't think that any of us would have been happy putting any kind of message across if we'd felt that our playing wasn't as good as it could have been. There were more than enough sloppy punk bands around who didn't seem bothered much about playing well.

Lance - What was the anarcho punk scene like in 1982? Do you feel like you were part of something that was seriously affecting the status quo or did you feel like it was strictly a revolution in music?

Colin - Neither - the music was important but as an entity wasn't something we were trying to change. I guess we thought we were changing the attitude of the world, but influencing a few people's lives in a better direction was more like it, and looking back not a bad thing to have done.

Kevin - In '82 the scene was still thriving, but it did seem that a lot of the time we were preaching to the converted. There were also a lot of punks who professed to be into quite diametrically opposed bands, which always seemed strange to me. A punk came up to me after one gig, and asked me in some depth what we understood by Anarchy as a belief and as a way of life - it was as if he was expecting a kind of verbal thesis on the subject, but I noticed that he had "THE EXPLOITED" painted in large letters on his leather jacket,

along with "CRASS" and "FLUX", and as soon as I saw that, I basically told him to shove it.

Lance - Many people think of "Strive To Survive..." as one of the seminal anarcho punk records. How do you reflect on that record and the lyrics?

Colin - The best we could have done at the time. Other than crank up the guitars a bit I'd leave it as it is; things are best left as they happened at the time.

Kevin - Colin was responsible for most of the lyrics to the songs on "Strive", so I guess he's better qualified to answer this one; however, I still think that the album still stands as a good record; as good as most, better than many.

Lance - What was the idea in using such a long slogan for the record title?

Colin - Can't remember - I don't think it seemed long, it was a line that summed up the album, so length didn't enter into it.

Lance - The liner notes talk about police harassment in trying to obtain photos for the record cover. Do you remember anything about those times and the police troubles?

Colin - Well we used to love pushing things too far, and in doing so often had the police sniffing



around. Lots happened back then - mail going missing, phones being tapped - but I sometimes wonder if we made the whole thing up!

Lance - What other hassles were you getting from the police at the time?

Colin - Nothing else really, same as anyone else. Most of the hassle on the album cover was through trespassing on private land, but in everyday life we weren't really troubled at all.

Lance - Were you playing out much then? What were the gigs like at the time? Did you get to do any touring? What bands were you playing a lot with?

Colin - We gigged a fair bit all over the country, quite often with The System, Amebix, Rudimentary Peni, and Antisect.

Lance - How do you reflect on your performing at the Zig Zag festival? What was the experience like for you?

Colin - The 'gig' was great, one of the last squat gigs and after that we realized that we needed to be based in London and get more involved in things like that. Skinheads wrecked the place in the end - I fucking hated them at the time.

Lance - You also appeared on the "Wargasm" LP. What was that record about and how did you come to be on it?

Colin - Marcus Featherby put the album out - a rather nice chap. The album was released to promote the idea of Anti-War, and to raise money for Anti-War groups and a donkey sanctuary.

Kevin - You'd have to ask Colin how Flux came to appear on "Wargasm" as I wasn't a member of Flux at the time; however, Spider (from The System) played drums on that version of "Tapioca Sunrise", as this was soon after Bambi had been kicked out, and I played guitar on it (a month or so before I rejoined), as I had recently done the re-recording of the "1970s" EP with Colin and Derek, and Neil (their then guitarist) couldn't - or

wouldn't - get a day off from work, so they asked me to do it.

Lance - By 1983, the band seemed pretty fed up with the whole anarcho punk scene. What were some of the factors leading to your disillusionment? Colin - I'm not sure if we were disappointed with the anarcho scene - we just went looking for new ways to get our ideas across.

Kevin - By the end of 1982 I had got fed up with the anarcho scene in general and Flux in particular. I had sensed for some time that the rest of the band were getting more into the message and less into the music, so I was considering telling them that I felt like I was the one who was out of step with them, and that I should leave. I thought I might stay until the end of the year, as we had no gigs planned very far into the next, and I didn't want to let them down on gigs that were already organized. In fact I had no idea that I was going to leave until the gig in Nottingham in November '82 (the gig that was recorded and issued as the "Live Statement" CD last year) when Antisect did their set before ours. Derek, Colin and Martin were really impressed with Antisect, and just before we got on stage, they were telling me that maybe we should be more like them - I thought they were dire, a fourth-rate Discharge, so I decided then and there that this was my last gig with Flux. I've heard many people say that they were inspired to form a band by seeing or hearing a particular band, but when I saw Antisect I was inspired to leave a band. Also, unknown to me, Derek, and Martin when we started playing "Progress", we soon discovered that Colin had arranged with Lou (from DIRT) to sing backing vocals with him (Colin was



trying get off with her at the time). We weren't on very good form that night anyway - maybe I wasn't trying very hard as I'd decided that this was the end of the line as far as I was concerned - and Lou made us sound really shitty with her screechy off-key voice. Anyway, the next night I rang Colin and told him that I was chucking it in - I thought that he might have already guessed by my attitude that I wasn't happy about a lot of things - but he was completely surprised.

We had a long talk about, and ended the conversation very amicably. We lost touch somehow, Flux shared a house together, and I didn't see or speak to Colin again until about 1989!

**Lance - In a way, ramming to point home, the next record was "The Fucking Cunts..." which I quite like. To me, it's sort of like your "Metal Machine Music". What were some of the ideas that led to this record? What were some of the types of music you were listening to that influenced it?**

Colin - We went into the studio to record four songs, and came out with a double album of complete crap. Good fun at the time, but I can't imagine it's possible to listen to it all in one go. Derek had a bee in his bonnet about something, and we just followed his lead, but looking back I can honestly say that we'd lost the plot.

**Lance - Do you think that any part of the record was a caustic reaction to what was happening in the music scene at the time?**

Colin - God knows; Crass had done a noise album so we did one! It's a bit easier than writing 'proper' songs and makes you sound really angry - even if you're not.

**Lance - The record deals a lot more with gender issues, sexism and misogyny. More than once the lyrics equate pornography with rape. How do you reflect on these positions now?**

Colin - To be honest, when Kev left we replaced him with two guitarists, Lou and Timothy Luke, and neither could actually play, so a 'noise'/concept album was all we could do. Sexism wasn't a good thing then and it isn't a good thing now.

**Lance - What was the meaning behind the record title?**

Colin - The idea was to give it a title that might get us into trouble and get publicity to further the cause.

**Lance - What was it like recording the record? Where did you record it? Was it a pretty complex job?**

Colin - It was recorded at Southern Studios. The whole thing was made up on the spot. We went out and bought some scrap metal to bang. (Oh the heady wine of youth!)

**Lance - Did you play out much to support the record? What were gigs like at this point?**

Colin - Gigs went down badly when we started to play just the "Fucking Cunts" album. At one gig, after three 'songs' people started shouting so we just called a halt.

**Lance - Were you surprised at how people reacted to the record? Were you surprised at the record sales?**

Colin - Nope, no.

**Lance - Can you remember what the reviews for the record were like at the time?**

Colin - Can't remember any reviews - I can remember our next EP being made Single Of The Week in NME before the guy had even heard or seen the record. Outrageous!

**Lance - Who did the amazing artwork that went along with the record?**

Colin - Andy of Crass had doodled them on writing paper many years before. At this time he was feeling a little bit disillusioned with Crass and was helping us out a bit.

**Lance - The next record was "Taking A Liberty" in 1984 and was sort of a step back into "accessible", for lack of a better term, musical areas. What were some of the musical ideas that went into this record?**

Colin - Well it was "Fucking Cunts" with organization! The B-side was good but looking back we'd lost the plot (still).

**Lance - The liner notes are a narrative and pretty tense story. Is any part of it autobiographical? What was the idea behind printing the story?**

Colin - Derek wrote the story slagging off a 'have-a-go' hero, which

is strange because Derek was the No. 1 'have-a-go' hero!

**Lance - Who did the artwork for this record?**

Colin - I did the artwork using Japanese brushes splashing with as few strokes as possible to convey a picture.

**Lance - Did the band play out much in '84 and '85? What were you doing for most of that time? Were there any other records on Spider Leg after "Taking A Liberty"? How did Spider Leg become One Little Indian? How many of you were involved with that label?**

Colin - We played at a squat venue in Camden, North London, called The Glasshouse, and foiled-up the whole stage - covered it with aluminium foil - came on like a big rock band, played solos, then did an encore (nearly naked), and I had the best night of my life! The message being, 'you hated "Fucking Cunts", you want rock 'n' roll - here it is!' Everybody loved it - anyone who's got pictures or a tape of this gig contact me NOW!

**Lance - The last record was "Uncarved Block". First of all, why change the name to Flux? Why did you drop the rest of the name?**

Colin - The name change was just a way of updating ourselves - we were always just called Flux anyway.

**Lance - The title is a reference to "The Tao Of Pooh". What was it about that book that you found so inspirational?**

Colin - I read it 15 years ago and remember really enjoying it and thinking that it all made sense.

**Lance - This third album was another drastic change in style. What led to this musical incarnation?**

Colin - Over the last few years we'd become friends with a whole new bunch of people, and the album was a mixture of 20 peoples' input.

**Lance - It's really quite a pretty record. How did the punks who had followed Flux all along react to the record?**

Colin - Can't remember asking, seeing or meeting any punks at the time, so I've no idea.

**Lance - The lyrical ideas are a bit more abstract and even vague at times. Do you feel like the band was still very political at that time?**

Colin - The lyrics are vague? You bet! I was singing stuff I had no idea of the meaning of, lots of long nice-sounding words - very poetic!

**Lance - What were the ideas with the cover art? What was the idea with the inner sleeve and all the different logos and emblems?**

Colin - The inner sleeve was a collage of multi-national company logos, left/right political symbols, everything; the idea being that when all that power is all squeezed together on paper it just looks like wallpaper.

**Lance - What were live gigs like at the time? Did you still have any association with the old anarcho scene? Did you tour on the record?**

Colin - We did one gig in London only playing songs from "Uncarved Block" and the anarcho scene certainly wasn't there; we then played two gigs in Holland doing songs from all of the records. After the first gig we realized that the audience was only after the Uncarved Block/Adrian Sherwood stuff, so we made all the other songs sound like "Uncarved Block" tracks at the second gig. We then played Belgium, took one look at the gig poster - très punk! - and made everything sound like the first album!

**Lance - Why did the band split up? What were the final factors?**

Colin - After these gigs we were approached to play in the USA and more gigs in Europe. I was the only one who was up for it, the others were becoming too involved with their careers so I upped and went and formed a new band, Hotalacio.

**Lance - Did you know that the band was ending while you were working on "Uncarved Block"?**

Colin - No, not really, but we hadn't gigged for two years and "Uncarved Block" was Derek's baby; after that I couldn't see where we could have gone with the band.

**Lance - How do you reflect back on the band? Do you ever listen to any of the records?**

Colin - I never listen to it – partly because I haven't got a record player anymore, and Derek's too tight to send copies of the One Little Indian CDs.

Lance - Do you still feel like you stand behind most of the

at the time. We felt that we had done some good stuff, but there wasn't anything still available apart from the shoddy One Little Indian reissue of "Strive". All the Overground CDs ("System Rejects" by The Epileptics/"Not So Brave" and "Live Statement" by

All through our lives  
We are shoved about  
Some of us scream  
Some of us shout  
Some of us complain,  
protest  
While others smile in  
ecstasy

We as one are saying  
We don't want their life  
no more  
Fuck off

#### ideas behind Flux Of Pink Indians?

Colin - Yes, I think I do, but instead of changing the world to your viewpoint, it's probably better to take your viewpoint/style of living and set up a thing of your own; why should everyone else change over to your point of view?

Lance - How do you reflect back on the whole anarcho scene? Do you feel like it was any type of legitimate challenge to power structures? Or was it all too naïve?

Colin - It's hard to say if it changed anything – the world just changes itself in the end. But it was well worth doing; kept us off the streets.

Kevin - Additionally I'd like to say that I think that the reason the whole anarcho punk thing died (as far as I'm concerned) is that 99% of the bands were (and most still are) just too unadventurous with their sound and arrangements. Maybe the blame lies with the audiences who were/are so single-minded - I thought that the original idea of punk was to have a vibrant, exciting, challenging sound, but most seemed/seem content to have the same, one dimensional sound - so fucking boring!

Lance - What led you to release the recent live and demo CDs?

Colin - CDs weren't around when we were releasing stuff, so it seemed like a good way to document certain gigs/recording, and if anyone wanted to buy it - good for them.

Kevin - The recent CDs were a result of a good friend (and Epileptics/Flux fan from way back in '79), Mark Woodley, getting together with John Espen (of Overground Record), and their enthusiasm for the band, coupled with continuing interest in the anarcho punk stuff, and our desire to put out some recordings that weren't issued

Flux) were done with our full consultation and co-operation.

Lance - What other bands and/or musical projects did everyone do after leaving the band? Do you still all see each other?

Colin - Derek had the nerve to get involved with major record labels; Kev writes a lot of stuff for music magazines; Martin played with Pete of Crass in Judas II; I did an album and 12" in the band Hotalacio on my own label (Big Kiss) and later did a couple of dance 12"s under the name Influx. Now I do bugger all and it's great! The music business is total wank.

Kevin - I played switched from guitar to bass in 1986 to play with a band called The Primebeats, a kind of Stooges-meet-Elvis punk outfit, who were more interested loud shirts, louder amps, drinking Budweiser and playing supercharged psychedelic rock 'n' roll than preaching politics. A refreshing change for me certainly.

After that I met up with Colin in late '89, and he asked me to join his new band, Hotalacio, but I declined as they were influenced by rap and dance music, which I hated. We kept in touch after that and got together occasionally (in particular to discuss the first of the Overground reissues); a couple of years ago I worked with Colin in North London, at his business - he'd started his own company, building wooden furniture - but I recently left as I moved further away. We're still friends though. I haven't seen or spoken to Derek since my last gig with Flux in '82 - and I doubt that it bothers him since he's become a big shot in the music business.

I saw Martin about a year after I left Flux, and once about five years ago.

*David Kerekes is one of the editors of "Headpress: The Journal of Sex-Religion-Death". Relating a wide variety of controversial elements from pop culture and the counter culture, Headpress is consistently self-aware and insightful. Kerekes has also written and edited several books including "Killing For Culture" (co-written with David Slater), "Sex Murder Art", and "See No Evil: Banned Films and Video Controversy" (with Slater).*

**Lance** – First of all, what inspired you to start Headpress? Had you any involvement with fanzines or fanzine culture before that?

David Kerekes – It all started in 1991 when myself and two friends decided to pool some money together in order to try and release Jörg Buttgereit's (then current) film *Der Todesking* on video in Britain. As you may know, each film released on video or theatrically in Britain has to have carry a certificate from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), which isn't cheap, and there's no guarantee you'll be given a certificate once they've viewed the film anyway. You give the BBFC your money, they watch the film and then decide whether to classify it, request cuts, or reject it. We figured that, in spite of its subject matter (seven suicides), *Der Todesking* had a good chance of

getting through. Which it did. We released it as a limited numbered edition and with the money we made on that, decided to put out a magazine rather than split it three ways. That was Headpress.

Before that I had written some stuff for *Shock Xpress* and *Sheer Filth*.

**Lance** – What other publications or writers do you look up to? What inspires Headpress?

David Kerekes – I generally tend to still read film based fanzines, although that kind of subversive edge to them — prevalent in the film zines of the eighties when there was a lot less of them about — has generally disappeared. My favorite film zines at the moment are *Is it... Uncut?* and *Shock Cinema*. They always make me wish I had another publication running alongside Headpress, dedicated solely to film.

What inspires Headpress? Everyday stuff...I live it.

**Lance** – Who is David Slater and how did you two get together?

David Kerekes – Dave Slater is one of the founders of Headpress (the third guy is Dave Flint, who published *Sheer Filth* and *Divinity* for a time). We got together through the 'video nasties' furor in Britain — which threw an awful lot of people together — and became drinking buddies.

**Lance** – How closely do you work with your various contributors? How do you find your contributors?

David Kerekes – It depends. A lot of contributors write in to say I've got an idea for this or that, while others will ask about the themes we have planned for future editions and write something specifically with that in mind. On the odd occasion I will ask a regular contributor to write something specifically. It's all very much 'play it by ear'.

**Lance** – Have you ever turned down a submitted article due to content?

David Kerekes – I assume you mean an article where I considered the content a bit too extreme or racy? Nothing springs to mind. For space reasons, however, I do tend to bounce articles back an issue or two quite often. Occasionally I won't run something because for whatever reason I don't think it 'works'. Actually, I did turn down the idea of a comic strip based on the 'Moors Murders' for *Killer Komix* 2. The Moors Murders remains an extremely volatile case here, which exists in a kind of critical limbo — by that I mean

no one can say anything about the case which is at all ambiguous, and isn't one-hundred per cent damning of the killers. And to interpret child-killers in a comic strip? Comics are for kids, right?... Plus, I live only a trunk-of-a-car ride from the Moors!

**Lance** – In an early issue, you mentioned that the NME wouldn't run an ad for *Killing For Culture* because it contained the word "snuff". Have you run into any other attempts to sabotage Headpress or your writing in the past? David Kerekes – That's right, they had to drop the word 'snuff' from the ads. But I wouldn't say it was a case of the NME trying to sabotage Headpress or *Killing for Culture*! I think it's more a political correctness issue on their part, and testament to the weird mythology that surrounds the idea of the 'snuff' film.

**Lance** – In earlier issues, you covered a lot of the Hong Kong action cinema before it really took off as a genre in the West. Do you feel like that film world is totally played out? Do you still keep up with it?

**Lance** – Do you think that scene died with so many of the stars selling out to the states? David Kerekes – I've never been a big fan of Hong Kong films, and you'd probably find that the majority of those pieces and reviews

weren't written by me. There are Hong Kong films which I do enjoy, of course. Before Hong Kong cinema really took off in the West, it was only the more exceptional movies that used to sneak through. Now that everything Hong Kong has a market in the West, we can see just how mediocre much of the stuff actually is. Take violence, for instance. I prefer to see violence in Western films more than I do in Hong Kong films. With Western movies I know and appreciate the lineage that the violence has gone through to get where it is: Violence in Western films to me is often more audacious because I know what has gone before in other Western movies, and where its inspirations lie. Hong Kong cinema draws on a cultural background and a society that is largely alien, and therefore there is little for me to measure the violence against. Violence is often meaningless because I can't fully appreciate the path it has taken to get to where it's at. (I don't want to watch any romantic Hong Kong films.) There are exceptions, of course:

I find Sonny Chiba movies more interesting than Chow Yun Fat's, because with Chiba violence is for violence sake; a universal language. I also like *The Story of Ricky* for the same reason. I appreciate *The Matrix* and *Charlie's Angels* are Western movies derivative of Hong Kong action cinema, but I know that and that's what makes the difference.

**Lance** – I like that many of the issues have themes. What was the most enjoyable theme that you worked on?

David Kerekes – I enjoy each new Headpress as I'm preparing and developing it. When it comes back from the printers, I'm already thinking of the next project. I rarely go back and look over previous issues, unless it's to check some detail or something.

**Lance** – I've heard Headpress compared to *Answer Me*, *Bizarre*, a lot of different things none of which I think are at all like what you do. How would you describe the differences between Headpress and those types of publications? How do you describe Headpress to people unfamiliar to it?

David Kerekes – I think comparisons between Headpress and *Answer Me!* are drawn because we are independent, idiosyncratic publications, with a very strong sense of identity, that aren't necessarily devoted to any one particular topic. With *Bizarre* it's a little different — they aren't independent and I expect they started because they saw a market potential. With Headpress it's the other

way around: publish first and look for the market afterwards!

Describing Headpress is a tough one: I've got a standard-line which uses terms like 'pop culture', 'counter culture', 'underground' and 'transgressive', but it's really about stuff that I find of interest, or suspect may be of interest to other people.

Lance – The sub-title of Headpress is "The Journal of Sex-Religion-Death".

What does that mean to you? Is it an existential journey or do you feel that it's some sort of human desire for immortality?

David Kerekes – Calling something Headpress really doesn't give too much away. So it's important to give people a little more of an idea. Of course, when you think about it, 'sex, religion & death' pretty much encompasses everything there is to encompass, but at the same time has certain connotations. And any combination of any of those words would be seen as a subversive act to a lot of people.

Lance – Do you think there is a Freudian connection between sex fetishism, religious fanaticism and random violence? Or are they all just random occurrences within a population of several billion?

David Kerekes – Maybe I thought it was important for me to know the answer to this question once upon a time, but not any more. Leave it to the scientists.

Lance – Were you brought up in a religious household? Do you consider yourself at all religious or spiritual?

David Kerekes – I was brought up a Roman Catholic. Went to Catholic schools. Was taken to church whilst at school. And, like the majority of kids at school, I always considered Catholicism as something you had to do, not something you especially believed in. 'Going to church' was not a ritual that I ever believed important for the sake of my soul. I was always nagged by the idea that such a Great and

Powerful God would need to dream something like that up. Rules of worship. It never made sense.

As for me being religious... You don't shake a Catholic upbringing, and to be honest I wouldn't want to. It clarifies my perception, like being given a drug and becoming immune to it. It makes me make Headpress.

Lance – Do you ever worry that you trivialize or desensitize people with some of the harder issues you cover like serial killers or suicide? David Kerekes – I try not to.

Lance – Do you feel that such intense intellectual space being dedicated to such subjects affects your own psyche? Is it ever just too much for you?

David Kerekes – Working a nine-to-five grind wouldn't make me happy. I've had too many jobs where you pick one component out of the box on the left and drop into the box on your right, and believe me that affected my psyche a lot more than Headpress does.

Lance – Your critiques and investigation of sexual and pornographic literature varies greatly from standard porn fair to De Sade. What nerve do you think connects all of those forms of erotica?

David Kerekes – The nerve that is sex and horror. And the nerve that is entertainment and information.

Lance – Do you feel that stan-

dard pornography needs to be subject to the same aggressive literary criticism as De Sade?

David Kerekes – No, it doesn't need to be. But I like it when it is.

Lance – You also have random coverage of music. What are the criteria for your musical coverage?

David Kerekes – I think the music coverage in Headpress is too



random. We used to get a lot of extreme noise stuff, but thankfully that has stopped now.

**Lance – What music do you listen to?**

David Kerekes – Sixties garage rock, psych, beat music, bad prog rock, folk-rock; some off-the-wall stuff ... I'm pretty particular.

**Lance – Do you feel that a publication like Headpress could exist in the States or do you think that what you do can only exist in the context of England and England's morality?**

David Kerekes – That's a good question. I wouldn't like to say Headpress couldn't exist outside of England, but it exists in the form that it is now because of England and England's morality. Initially, in the early days, we considered British obscenity laws a hindrance and an obstacle, but it didn't take long to realize that we could use the laws to our own ends. It helps us be more creative: We can't show this picture or that picture, so what can we show in its place? Nowadays I don't even have that kind of dilemma. I kind of look at things askance if they prove too easy.

**Lance – What led to your love / hate relationship with Led Zeppelin?**

David Kerekes – A jukebox in a pub when I was a teenager seemed to have only two records on it, one of which was "Whole Lotta Love". It got played about every twenty minutes. I liked it at first, then I hated it and hated the band that created it. One day I decided to pick up *Houses of the Holy* (I can't remember why that Zep album in particular, maybe it was cheap), and felt thoroughly burned. It was awful. (I've never listened to it since.) That cemented my hate relationship with Led Zeppelin. I came around when a friend of mind taped a bunch of live Zep boots for me, and I got to see Dread Zeppelin in concert. Both were insane. I also liked the title of an article in *Sleazoid Express*, which was essentially a review of *The Song Remains the Same*: 'Are Led Zeppelin Faggots?' Now I'm on a downward turn again: I'm bored by Zep.

**Lance – What do you think of Taschen and the erotic books they do? Do you think they're really taking chances or do you think they're just acting like they're taking chances?**

David Kerekes – I really don't think Taschen work like that. They're not based in Britain, so I guess

they don't worry too much about having to 'take chances'. I like some of the stuff they do — what we review in Headpress is the stuff of theirs that I generally find most interesting. As interesting as coffee table, photo books ever are.

**Lance – I really loved "Killing For Culture". What made you want to write that book?**

David Kerekes – A love for Mondo films (circa sixties, seventies & eighties) and a fascination with the weird, mythological concept of the 'snuff' film.

**Lance – Do you think films like "Snake Feast" or "Gator Bait 10" really exist?**

David Kerekes – No, I don't. I doubt that such volatile, criminal subject matter would be given such volatile titles that are positively crying out for attention.

**Lance – Surely some "real" snuff films must exist though maybe not mass-marketed by porn standards.**

David Kerekes – We are living in a culture of Reality based TV, where virtually every night of the week you can tune into programs featuring 'funny' home movie clips, cops on the beat, natural disasters, man-made disasters, stunts going wrong, criminals caught in the act, bad drivers, Big Brother, Reality-game shows, and so on. Technology and Media have created a new medium, where blurry acts on film — no matter how dull, dangerous or despicable — are processed into mass entertainment. It's voyeurism at a safe distance. The media wants your film clip, and technology gives everyone the means to go out and get it. If Concorde falling out of the sky in flames can happen to be caught on film by a passing motorist, it's

not illogical to assume that a calculated murder may one day 'happen' to pop up on the news. Hollywood is priming us with the likes of *15 Minutes* and *8mm*.

**Lance – What do you think is the fascination with "snuff" films? Is it anything to do with idle hands being the devil's tools? Or are people so alienated, they're desperate for any form of reality? Sort of like an abused child who learns to love punishment as a form of attention from its abuser.**

David Kerekes – Snuff is like a good detective novel, and we're still waiting for the ending.

**Lance – I just read "See No Evil". It's fascinating to me that so many films are banned in England. How can they completely ban a film? Aren't there any underground film theaters that just play what they want?**

David Kerekes – A film qualifies as being 'banned' if it doesn't have a certificate. The BBFC — the governing body which examines and classifies films — don't actually say they ban movies, and they don't like to be regarded as censors, even though they continue to advise distributors on what scenes 'need' to be cut before they will pass a movie!

There's no way a film without a certificate can legally be made available on video in Britain if it doesn't carry a BBFC certificate. This makes truly independent filmmaking and distribution virtually non-existent here, though it does exist. Theatrically it's a little different, as local government can over-rule the BBFC and decide on what films can play. For instance, *Last House on the Left* and *I Spit on your Grave* are two films refused a certificate on video, yet have seen limited theatrical screenings.

**Lance – A lot of the films banned in England seem almost chosen at random whereas other films that are at times even more brutal are permitted. How political are these decisions?**

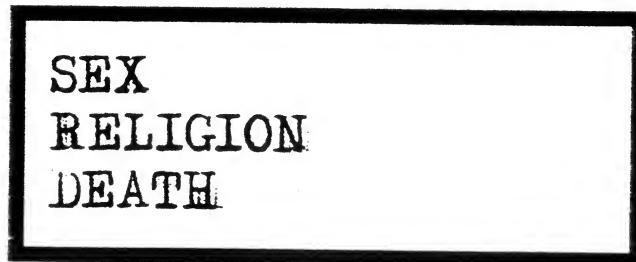
David Kerekes – You're quite right about the random aspect. High-profile videotapes stood a greater chance of being singled out as liable for prosecution. Many of the films that landed on the 'banned list' were no more graphic or shocking than many films which didn't. Indeed less so in a lot of cases. A film's title could often have a lot to do with it;

hence you had cops confiscating copies of *The Big Red One* (Sam Fuller's war film) and *The Best Little Warehouse in Texas* (a musical comedy starring Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton), believing them to be porno.

Laws are created and passed in Parliament that govern what we see and what we shouldn't be allowed to see; politicians also like to be seen doing the right thing, and campaigning for the sake of 'the children'. So, yes, it is fairly political.

**Lance – Do you think that in time the censorship laws in England will fade and you won't have controversies like the one with "Crash"? Do you feel that all the films in your book will at some point be allowed in England?**

David Kerekes – There has been a shake-up at the BBFC in the last year-or-so, since the retirement of its director James Ferman. Many of the films that were once 'banned' have come out over here, albeit some with minor cuts. However, other films have appeared in longer versions than they were originally released back in the eighties, before the clampdown on videos. This is because it is illegal to make a film that was once rejected by the BBFC available again in the same 'rejected' form. Getting around the loophole means that the film has to be in some way different from the earlier version, whether it's in making cuts or reinstating 'found' footage. Even *Natural Born Killers* — the video release of which was pulled by a nervy Warner Brothers following the murder of James Bulger — is finally set for a video release in Britain, despite the fact that it played nationally in theatres years ago, and even on TV a number of times. Headpress website: [www.headpress.com](http://www.headpress.com)



Last December we had the great pleasure of touring Japan with Minority Blues Band. Aside from having done a split 7" with them years ago, I really didn't know that much about them. We had never met and I didn't know a whole lot about their music. But now I'm a follower. Live they are a blast of energy and melody rivaling some of the most ear-splitting Husker Du shows. A trio all focused and sweating and into what they're doing. It's a mix of the Leatherface/Jawbreaker rasp with bits of older British power pop and punk. On record, it's a more melodic affair (of course) with the energy contained just enough to make great pop documents. They are Spalding - vocals, guitar, George - bass and Yumi - drums.

Lance - First of all, have any of you been in any bands before? What made you first interested in playing music?

Spalding - I'm Spalding from MBB and I appreciate for your offer about this interview. All of us were playing in some other bands before MBB but all the bands were just personal things like a cover band. I started playing guitar when I was 20 and it was

late start than average I think. My friend asked me to paint a picture on his guitar and I did. It seems he didn't like my picture and he gave me that guitar. It was my first guitar to play.

Lance - How did the three of you meet?

Spalding - I met George one year after I started playing guitar through the guy both of us knew. Then George asked me to play Bass in his band and we played together for a short time. I started my band but I finished it soon too. So I started to find new bassist and drummer for my new band. I met Yumi through my friend and George joined in when first bassist left the band. And it became Minority Blues Band.

Lance - How did you first become aware of punk rock? Coming from the South, how difficult is it to find out about new music?

Spalding - The old drummer from THREE MINUTE MOVIE was old friend of George and we learned a lot of underground punk bands through him when he was playing in another band at Tokyo. If we didn't know him, I didn't meet real Punk and I'd play "commercial punk music". It's so difficult to get the chance to meet real Punk things. So I think I was so lucky. I know Punk gave me chances to concern many things I didn't care before.

Lance - How long has there been punk rock down where you live? Did any of the first generation of Japanese punk bands come from your area?

Spalding - World famous D-Beat band, DISCLOSE came from this island we live but I don't know any another bands I should mention to. I'm sorry.

Lance - Minority Blues Band is an unusual name for a punk band. What does the name mean?

Spalding - Name of band is important, I think cooler is better. I don't know our name is cool or not, but we decided it because we thought it's cool then. We're twisted and we can't live Majority

lifestyles, so we're Minority. I used to love Blues music then. I think a punk band named blues band is funny. Also we sing sad songs and we can say it's our blues. Anyway, it's difficult to name a band than writing songs! Especially we have no senses to do it.

Lance - You seem to have been influenced by American and British bands. Do you feel like there is any sort of a "Japanese" sound?

Spalding - I'm listening to Western oriented music everyday, so I'm influenced a lot by it. I'm not conscious but I think I've been influenced by Japanese old popular music I listened to when I was very young. Japanese pronunciation is different from another language so I think it influences my singing.

Lance - How did you meet up with Snuffy Smiles?

Spalding - Well, 4 years go maybe, we got the chance to play at Kyoto with SKIMMER and TRAVIS CUT from England and it was the first time to meet him. He was down there to help their tour. Me and George were die hard fans of Snuffy Smile and it was like our dreams came true to

work together for our records or shows with Snuffy Smile. I love his releases and also his way to run a label or things. I can say Japanese punk scene was very poor without Snuffy Smile.

Lance - Many of your lyrics, especially on the first record seem really down. Do you think of yourself as a depressed person?

Spalding - Oh, finally about the lyrics, I really like to talk about it. When I write the lyrics, I'm always struggling to write cool and thoughtful lyrics, then somehow my lyrics will turn to the lyrics you mentioned as "really down". Even if you think it's strange but I have to say I'm so happy to write "down" lyrics. It's like feeling refreshed when I cry my gloomy emotion. Anyway, my English is kinda strange

and I'm wondering whether you could understand what I want to say as I hope it works. Maybe I'm a depressed person. I'm the kind of straight-faced guy and it seems I'm taking things seriously too much and sometime I can't take things easy. I read books about Nietzsche, he's more straight-faced guy about his life and everything and he wanted to break it and enjoy his life, I have a bit sympathy to him. I read books about Nietzsche, he's more straight-faced guy about his life and everything and he wanted to break it and enjoy his life. I have a bit sympathy to him.

Anyway, I hope I can enjoy my everyday life even if my lyrics seems "really down".

Lance - Yumi is a great drummer. In the states, many women in punk have to face a lot of adversity with sexism in the scene. How much is that an issue for her and your band?

Spalding - I don't see a lot of sexism apparently in our scene but there are few women in the scene and I suppose it's tough for her somehow. She said she's never thought about that kind of things but it seems hard to be in the male oriented scene like Punk scene.

## MINORITY BLUES BAND



I think there are few people tend to be sexist around us and maybe it's better situation than another scene I've never seen.

Lance - You've covered the Newtown Neurotics and Thatcher On Acid. Do you feel like you relate to those bands?

Spalding - I have to say we asked Yoichi to give us the songs for covering. But now I think both bands are great. I can't write their kind of songs and I really envy their talents to write songs. I hope I could write the songs like them in future.

Lance - What is the meaning behind the titles of your two CDs "Grab the FireSwinging in the Rain" and "Capitalized Suffering"?

Spalding - As for as "Grab the Fire Swinging in the Rain", it means the impossible struggle for a structure of impossibility. It's like the way of Punk Rock band I think. It seems sad efforts but I don't think it's meaningless. About "Capitalized Suffering", it's like the question about the things we believe what they are. I think about my suffering and sometime I can't figure out it as my real feeling. I'm wondering where it comes from and I'm feeling so sad when I find if my suffering is capitalized in my life. I used "Capitalized" like the word not far from "Implanted"...

Lance - How do you compare the two records?

Spalding - About 1st album, I was thinking easy about guitar phrases before the recording. When I recorded my guitar, I was upset. It didn't go well and I have many regrets about guitars. 2nd album is better than 1st. Because I've worked hard to decide details before the recording. Certainly I have a bit regrets but I tried my best. 1st record is not bad, but 2nd is more better 'cos I did my best.

Lance - What do you mean by "teacher" in "Get Dead Drunk"? What is that song about?

Spalding - It means some persons like the guy called "Jun Tsuji" who was an intellectual homeless wrote some books or "Yoichi" from Snuffy Smile. Maybe it means Punk Rock itself too...

That song has a desperate feeling for a broken hope. We have to keep living anyway, so we have to drink up the anger we can't find the way to put down, sometime we have an illusion that we can find the truth in a moment when I'm in a dim feeling by alcohol. I write many lyrics about the feelings or irritations I can't explain and this is the one of them. Bad feeling I can't see why.

Lance - Were you able to tour much in Japan to support your first record? How do you promote your music in Japan?

Spalding - Besides the tour with J Church, we played 5 shows with SUPER CHINCHILLA RESCUE MISSION from DC in 2002. Almost

every tour we did were short tours for 3-4 days. We've never had a long tour like the tour you do to support your album. I hope we could do it. Snuffy Smile is organizing tours for us in Japan. Yoichi is working for us to promote our band and basically we're leaving it to him.

Lance - "Capitalized Suffering" is your latest CD and it's pretty incredible. First off, what is the meaning of the cover art?

Spalding - He is the ancient Chinese poet called Li Po. I like him cause he was drunk, world-weary and poppy. I quit my job and live in a remote place now and he wrote some poetry I got a sympathy with.

Lance - Like your first record it's very tight. How much time do you spend working on songs before you record?

Spalding - I wrote all songs for albums in three or four months. About 2nd CD, I had much time for it because I quitted my job. But I was busy everyday to be particular about details. I think improvisation in studio is fun but we have such enough money and technique, we have to decide everything before recordings.

Lance - By far and away, my favorite song on the record is "Speak Same Old News". What is the lyrical idea behind the song?

Spalding - Good to hear you liked that song. About the lyrics, it's like a question for playing in Punk band. I'm playing in Punk band cause I love to do it but I'm singing same things again and again. I say "we are Punk" but sometime I'm wondering whether we don't do anything new. I know it's not the only important thing to create something new but I feel impatient for our conservative nature. I think we should not stop worrying for those kind of things and I want to keep doubting for ourselves. Do you know what I mean?

Lance - Do you feel that you are getting more popular with this second record out?

Spalding - I hear our new CD is selling faster than 1st one and I'm happy about it.

Lance - Are there any plans to do things in the states- license records, tour?

Spalding - No plans yet but I hope so. We'd find someone to help us some day. Who knows?

Lance - Anything else you wanna add?

Spalding - Thanks a lot for the interview. I hope we will play together again in future.



# MUSIC REVIEWS

## B

### BITCHIN' / ONION FLAVORED RINGS split 7"

I'm something of a fan of both of these bands with Bitchin' being my favorite thing on No Idea for the past few years and just generally enjoying anything Paul Curran puts his name on. Bitchin' do their thing which is big guitars, unusual vocal lines that are addictive plus an almost unusual energy that keeps it far from the indie quagmire. Over their three songs there are a lot of questions raised ("What's all this work and going to school?", "...are you all alone?") that are answered in the only way they know how ("Fuck your bourgeoisie!", "Not for nothing, leave your heart unguarded") and it all seems like pretty sound advice. The end result is strangely relaxing.

Onion Flavored Rings take the American punk aesthetics and accidentally transmute them with British indie sensibilities if inadvertently. In other words, there's a real early Wedding Present vibe going on here and I don't totally understand it – wish I knew how they did it – most importantly, I really love it. Like the album, these songs are great. That guitar sound is as honest as "Big Lizard In My Backyard".

([www.noidearecords.com](http://www.noidearecords.com))

### BOOMTOWN RATS, THE "Best Of..." CD

I used to hate this band. My sister had "The Fine Art Of Surfacing" and I just hated it. Sounded like Bruce Springsteen who I mostly hated at the time. I think part of why I hated them was because they were talking shit on the Clash and vice versa.

Well, guess what? I'm 37. I love "The River" and "Nebraska" and I like this. Yeah, a lot of it is corny and this is the guy behind all that "Live Aid" shit. But "She's So Modern" is a great song. It's like Vapors good! Like second album Vapors good! "Looking After No. 1" is remarkably a lot like the Buzzcocks. Of course, who doesn't like "(I Never Loved) Eva Braun" with its "New Rose" spoof. It's great punk rock, if you can believe it. Yeah, "Joey's On The Street Again" is still pretty 'naff though it sounds more like John Otway now and a lot less like Springsteen.

Funny thing is, it's the un-punk, un-rock stuff that I really dig now. I used to think that "Banana Republic" was boring as shit. Now it's a great subdued almost Lodger/Bowie-like. "The Elephants Graveyard" is like a shitty Elvis Costello outtake from "Armed Forces", and, y'know, that's still pretty fucking good.

There are 19 songs here. But that in half and you've still got everything you'll ever really need from the Boomtown Rats. That's enough to make this a keeper.

(Eagle Records – [www.eagle-rock.com](http://www.eagle-rock.com))

## C

### CARPENTERS, THE "Yesterday Once More" 2xCD

We're coming up on what would have been Karen Carpenter's 54<sup>th</sup> birthday (March 2<sup>nd</sup>) and we just passed the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of her death (February 4<sup>th</sup>) it seems like as good a time as any for me to declare my love for the music of the Carpenters. Who says landmarks have to come in fives and tens?

This double disc starts off with my three favorite songs by the Carpenters. I think they best sum up what I loved about the band. "Yesterday Once More", "Superstar" and "Rainy Days And Mondays" are perfect songs in my mind. The songs are sad and pretty at the same time. Karen Carpenter has one of the most beautiful and inimitable voices of all time. Her deep low voice conveyed so much

emotion on these songs in particular, that it wasn't too far a stretch to think her personal life was in complete disarray and the music truly was a vehicle for her to reach out.

The lyrics are near perfect. On "Yesterday Once More", Karen announces her relating to the audience as she puts herself in the same position. "When they get to the part where he's breaking her heart it can really make me cry." She GETS it. On "Superstar" it's an even heavier tale of unrequited love from the perspective of, perhaps, a groupie. There is real love and innocence in this possibly unhealthy relationship. "Don't you remember you told me you love me baby... Loneliness is such a sad affair..." This may be one of the five greatest songs of all time. Their methodology is perfected as well as a sense of self-awareness on "Rainy Days And Mondays". "What I've got they used to call the blues... Hanging around. Nothing to do but frown."

The music on these songs is perfect. They are wonderfully arranged and are almost tediously constructed to maximize the emotive strengths of both the vocal delivery and the content of the lyrics. "Superstar" even has a beautiful 7 bar Brian Wilson-esque middle 8 between the first chorus and the second verse. It's quite stunning and understated at the same time.

This collection has its duff moments. I'm not big on some of their corny stuff. But the good stuff is as good as any good cry you've ever had. I mark this music with the best of the '70s across the boards. I'll just end by listing the amazing songs that you should know and love "Goodbye To Love", "I Won't Last A Day Without You", "This Masquerade", "All You Get From Love Is A Love Song", "We've Only Just Begun", "Close To You".

"Loneliness is such a sad affair  
And I can hardly wait to be with you again  
What to say to make you come again  
Come back to me and play your sad guitar."  
(A&M Records)

### CAUSE FOR APPLAUSE CD

New York makes you wanna be Richard Hell. Maybe New York makes you wanna be what you assume Richard Hell is. Shit, what boy doesn't wanna look like Richard Hell on the cover of "Blank Generation"... or even "Destiny Street"...

Cause For Applause have married the Quine-like riffs and Hell-like phrasings with a chaotic mix of early Bad Seeds ramshackle. They make you feel like they're about the joyfully (and artfully) fall off the stage in a Dionysian expression.

Five songs here and you may even get a little bit of a "Psycho Mafia" here and there. It may not be enough for your teenage lust. But it'll help to ease your pain. Ease your bray-yay-yain.

([www.bighassle.com/a\\_cause\\_for\\_applause.html](http://www.bighassle.com/a_cause_for_applause.html))

## D

### JULIE DOIRON "Broken Girl" CD

Julie Doiron is a lot of why I loved Eric's Trip despite the terrible nature of their band name (I still can't bring myself to like any Sister Ray or Deacon Blue... thankfully).

This is Jagjaguwar's reissue of her first post ET solo album and a hushed beauty. I keep hearing people describe her music as Autumnal like she's Thoreau or something. Even with the understated nature of home recordings, I find these to be fine pop songs. You could surely blast "Soon, Coming Closer" or "Happy Lucky Girl" with the top down cruising down the PCH on a Summer afternoon.

But, of course, you can also meditate on the pain and suffering presented as a time capsule of a woman in flux. With the band and other break-ups and complications, this record is as much a con-

cept record as it is a series of diary entries.

The disc also includes some earlier material with '93's "Dog Love Part II" and '94's "Nora". Both are full of songs worth having easily accessible on the digital format (not to mention the OG version of "Dance Music").

([www.jagjaguwar.com](http://www.jagjaguwar.com))

## F

LA FRACTION "Aussi Long Sera Le Chemin" CD

To paraphrase one of my favorite television show, Home Movies, you always judge a book by its cover... that's what the cover is for. So, yeah, I've blown off this record cover because of the lame cover art. Hey, it's a cartoon of a skeleton lighting up a spliff for a hippie. It's got one of those fake warnings on the cover too: "Not for the mentally mature". But I was really blown away by these Frenchie-mFrench Fries when I saw them live and decided to check it out.

Before I knew what they sounded like I was sort of expecting something far crustier. Don't they somehow have a sort of bullet-belt and back-patch sort of following? Wrong, wrong, wrong. They may adhere ideologically to parts of that scene (if you're reading this there's a better than likely chance that you do to) but not musically. This is the classic mid-'80s French punk in the vein of Les Thugs and the criminally underrated Les Sheriff. The sound is melodic, quick-tempo, and has a stomp that people associate with those aforementioned bands.

Lyricaly, I don't know. It's that quintessential punk voice that can so easily be misinterpreted as anarchic freedom or existential longing. "However long it takes and whatever they say, my spirit will go free." Could be Emma Goldman or it could be Thoreau. Either way, it's the kind of thing that seems necessary to this kind of music.

(Fraction Productions, [fraction@altern.org](mailto:fraction@altern.org))



therefore can often catch you off guard. This isn't the sound of nature to go to sleep by. So, it does make sense as much as it doesn't. Like the recordings themselves, the project is intriguing in large part due to its self-imposed ambiguity and unevenness. (The Bang Kung Assn.)

## HAPPENING, THE "Shit Happens..." CD

Kaori is the girl behind so many great, underrated Japanese power pop / punk bands like Tami, My Winter Jane and Grace. Her latest

three piece is far and away the most powerful with a giant guitar sound and one of her most accommodating rhythm sections.

The songs are rockin' relying far less on standard pop punk hooks than in the past. The range of musical ideas encompasses everything from '70s rock to '80s power pop to '90s Jawbreaker / Discount type structure. "Brick Boy" even has bits of the Jam or more likely the Who.

The Happening are one of the few bands in Japan trying to do their own thing without living in the shadow of Snuff or American music for that matter. Great production doesn't hurt either. They even sing in English for you philistines that can't have it any other way. This is the kind of Japanese band that could be poised to break in America. But I don't see why that would be their (or anyone's) ambition. ([hppnng@hotmail.com](mailto:hppnng@hotmail.com))

## HORRIBLE ODDS, THE "Underground" 12"

I got a couple of records from Paul Curran last time he was in town and just didn't get around to listening to them right away. Let me just say that I really should know by now that I pretty much like anything Paul is connected to and I should have slapped this platter on the turntable as soon as he was out the door.

So, what ever did happen to 12" EPs? I used to love 'em. Sorta. There's something different about them. You could put more songs. But you're just doing what you think is necessary. That's maybe even noble.

The Horrible Odds are really fantastic for a lot of reasons. First of all, they've got a real sense of melody and a real sense of how to muck it up without losing it. I mean, that's an art. You can't just write pop songs or you'll wind up like any myriad of pop punk bands. You can't just be gravelly or you'll just be a rock band. These cats blend the two elements in a perfect recipe known to Crimpshrine, Leatherface and, at times, Husker Du.

But the band also has the chaotic element of speed vs. friction. They power through the songs with a controlled velocity that makes you think it's all gonna fall apart on impact. It's not fast music. It's a fast band playing against the music creating a dynamic that leaves you on the edge of your seat. This record is really quite a find. (Onion Flavored Records – Box 190054 – San Francisco, CA 94119)

## HOTWIRES, THE "Ignition" CD

Holy shit, this is the fucking rock of the moment. There's a fucking groove going on with this band that puts them miles ahead of their competition like the Mooney Suzuki or The Hives. They've got the big

## H

HAIRE, DOUG "Nineteen American Waysides" CD

Doug Haire is what's known as a "phonographer". That is, he is an artist "who uses phonographies (field recordings) as a primary instrument in their compositions." Sounds pretty simple. By committing found sounds in nature to tape, he creates sound collages the same way a film maker like Chris Marker did in "Sans Soleil" when he shot documentary footage from around the world and assembled them to form a work of fiction.

Now Doug Haire is one of many people struggling to further define both the field and their own identity in it. The lines between fiction and non-fiction are not so much blurred as intellectually displaced. With composition "titles" like "Salinas, KS 2pm" and "I-15s at ID/UT border 4pm" you wonder if it's a further displacement of meaning or is it just trainspotting.

The recordings are aesthetically violent despite the seeming emptiness of the recording locations. The technique is very blunt and

bang guitars and the strict order (via Modern Lovers) rhythm section. But they've also got this subtext of soul that means someone has got a great record collection and it ain't just American records.

Huggy Bear ripples still concentrically infect and dement the UK underground and The Hotwires are a great example of that. Now, is the art damaged revolution back to burning down the garage or were Huggy Bear secretly the greatest ideological and tactile response to Pussy Galore and we just missed the point... one of the points?

Streams of consciousness only sometimes reveal the subconscious. Sometimes they release a surface, spontaneous violence. Isn't that how the French students of '68 explained it? The Hotwires commit to each song like you commit to a brick behind a barricade. I'll bet when they finish a song live, they can't remember what just happened.

There are times when you're gonna say Heartbreakers meets "The Kid With The Replaceable Head". Other times you could say Dirtbombs meet Pussy Galore. There are even times when you could say RFTC meets X. Shit, this guy is a non-linear Richard Hell. You can really here it in the more subdued moments of "On The Street". How did I miss that with their 10"? It's fucking uncanny. As if I didn't love 'em enough...

(Artrocker – [www.artrocker.com](http://www.artrocker.com))

#### HUSBANDS, THE "Daniel / You Need Hands" 7"

Two more great tracks that seem to be leftovers from their LP. Make no mistake, these ain't no throwaways. Solid stuff here and I don't know what the girls can do wrong at this point. I've said this before to many people, so I hope I don't get boring. But Sarah Reed has an incredible voice and I would venture to say I think she's the best female vocalist around these days. It's that same sexy, nasty but not contrived that cut the Shangri Las so close to my heart. I also think that the backing vocals sound like a choir of stiletto angels, which is also real appealing.

Garage music can be a lot of things and people tend to get caught up in the fashion and let the music devolve into rehashing the Ramones or the Kinks. That's well and good. But there are those who are taking the art form seriously. There's a lot you can still do with a couple of guitars, drums and a great voice. Besides, pretty and beautiful aren't always the same thing. This is the epitome of beautiful garage music and if you've never heard them, this record will make you crave the LP.

(bluebusrecordings.com)

## K

#### KYRIAKIDES, YANNIS "A ConSPIracy Cantata" CD

Yannis Kyriakides composer of mixed media collage and combine that makes him sort of futuristic and dated at the same time. This is never so obvious in these interpretations of his compositions by Ayelet Harpaz, Stephie Buttrich and Marion von Tilzer. On the first track, "a conSPIracy cantata", they use recordings from Spy Stations, which I assume they culled from the Comet Project like everyone else (hey, we've used it twice!) alongside the ancient Oracle of Delphi. I hope the intention wasn't something as trite as the sacred and profane. What's intriguing about it is the contrasting technological sounds of the short-wave alongside the acoustic piano and vocal performances.

The second segment, "hYDArotizon", for me is the most beautiful. Audio signals being sent inside a piano vibrate the strings to create harmonics and hums that are far more random than any improvisation. It's a beautiful pea soup of metallic sheen and the sound of rusting. It's ghostly like an aurora borealis feedback.

Considering much of Kyriakides's composition relies on visuals (video and performance) I wonder if there was more to accompany these

pieces especially the final segment, "tetTIX" with its mixture of insect noise and vocal à la SPK/Graeme Revell.  
(Unsounds, [www.unsounds.com](http://www.unsounds.com))

## M

#### MINORITY BLUES BAND "Grab The Fire Swinging In The Rain" CD MINORITY BLUES BAND "Capitalized Suffering" CD

You can say this about nearly every punk rock band, but really, despite how great these two records are, there's nothing like seeing this band live. They really are incredible. I've had the pleasure of seeing them seven times in a row and each time was more remarkable than the first. Singer / guitar player Spalding is a ball of nerves; bassist George is as energetic as he is style-ish and words can't describe drummer Yumi. She's the best.

So, it's hard for me to go back and break these records down song by song. They're both great. On their first full length, "Grab the Fire..." the band are barely able to contain themselves. It's like early Jawbreaker but played full throttle and high speed. The melodies and tunes are perfect and masked by the sweet distorted noise of guitars and crashes. It's a bash. It's like finding the Beatles record trapped in "New Day Rising" or "Psycho-Candy". It's great underground pop.

On their more recent effort, they are a little more confident recording and it comes off as a more powerful record. More defined than before are songs that are clearly "hits". I mean, I'll never get tired of "Speak Same Old News, Sing Same Old Songs". I can hear that song over and over. May be the best thing on any Snuffy Smile release.

Dead serious, someone should really consider doing something with this band in the states. It would be a shame if they existed strictly as Japan's best-kept secret.

(Snuffy Smiles – 4-1-16-201 Daita, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 155-033 – Japan)

#### MOOR, ANDY AND KAFFE MATTHEWS "Locks" CD

British electronic artist Kaffe Matthews is unlike anyone else in her field. Maybe it's her choice of source material, but her aural conversions are particularly aggressive resulting in a confidence that is often lacking with other artists in the genre. This isn't some delicate little sound installation that feels like it's made of toothpicks. It's a wall of sound that uses force rather than seduction as its main device.

Along with Andy Moor of the Ex, she converts his unique Lindsay-esque guitar style into an even further developed sound. At times like a tsunami and other times like kettle drums from space, at times it's reminiscent of Matmos at their most aggro.

Having done several improvised performances together, this record is the distillation of ideas developed psychically through a deepening knowledge of each others creative processes. You know how there are all these beautiful surfing movies coming out lately like "Step Into Liquid" that are marred by stupid voice-overs and horrendous soundtracks? Next time, I'm gonna go see one of those flicks and listen to this on my discman while the movie plays.

(Unsounds, [www.unsounds.com](http://www.unsounds.com))

#### MOOR LEHN BUTCHER "Thermal" CD

John Butcher is pretty much accepted at this point as the most important free / experimental sax player in Europe... Possibly the world. Since the early '80s he's fused an economic style with experiments in tone, sound, breathing technique, etc. His collaborations are many and varied with this being one of the most way out.

Andy Moor we all know and love from The Ex. His guitar playing is a mix of Arto Lindsay in his Lounge Lizards days with anxiety of Gang of Four. Thomas Lehn has been composing and performing

experimental music since the early '80s in Germany where synth work has been decades ahead of the new wave of electronic experimentalism.

This collaboration sometimes sounds like three fighters surrounded and battling to the death. They're not really challenging each other. But they're all operating on this higher level that isn't in any way limited by the group scene, but is more focused. I almost wanna say that it's a more macho version of Mephisto. Maybe macho isn't really the best word. But there is something very strangely rock-n-roll about this. I can't put my finger on it. But it really makes you wanna pick up a guitar or some noisemaker.

(Unsounds, [www.unsounds.com](http://www.unsounds.com))

#### MOVIES, THE "In One Era Out The Other" CD

So Manchester is the new capitol of America. While I take issue with the nostalgia, I love this music and don't have the heart to attack its sentimentality. Nope. I'm not the mean punk rocker I was a decade ago. Now I can just let these waves rush over me. I'm not even stoned.

Instead I'll say that I resent Ben Kweller, I have some serious problems with Bright Eyes and I can't allow Ben Folds Five in my apartment. These are the rules and the fine line between these groups and, say, Sentridoh is a full Los Angeles city block.

The Movies: they're pretty. I'm gonna guess it's pretty music made by a bunch of waif-y, good-looking 25 year olds. Hopefully, they'll grow up to be the Bevis Frond or some other fat, old, hairy dudes making pretty music (what the hell are YOU lookin' at?). In the meantime, this sublime pop is irresistible. Every note and snare pop seems deliberate and organic at the same time creating the kind of friction that makes records like this challenging. The songs are pretty enough that with the wrong approach, you could be stuck with another group of Coldplays faking to the throne.

The Movies: They're not really the Wake. But they're not Hefner either. But there are distinct (though sure inadvertent) elements of both in this lush record.

([www.gernblandsten.com](http://www.gernblandsten.com))

#### S

##### SEXY "Por Vida" LP

Drunk and fucked up pop punk punched into vinyl can sometimes become something entirely different. Listening to this record you can get two really different perspectives.

On the one hand, yup, they've got that thing that you would expect Paul Curran to be attracted to. I remember years ago he was giving me a hard time for writing a review in Maximum Rock N Roll where I was comparing a band to Nar. We both loved Nar. But he thought it was funny that I was describing an obscure band by using an even more obscure band as a reference. But now I can't think of a better way of describing certain bands. It's upbeat catchy punk with as many references musically to folk and '60s rock as it does

to Gilman St. It's, y'know, post-Crimpshrine or maybe deconstructed Crimpshrine. It's great.

One the other hand, they're teetering out of control with every song. In fact, with every generation of the record it seems like they're beautifully flying into deterioration. It's like Guided Missile seeds have been sown. There's a Yummy Fur-ness to the whole picture. I wonder if Yummy Fur were actually attempting to sound like Nar or Sexy without ever knowing it.

Incidentally, if I had the money, first thing I would do would be a Nar CD retrospective.

(Onion Flavored Records – Box 190054 – San Francisco, CA 94119)



SUBHUMANS "Football Bootleg: Live In Bristol 2001" CD

SUBHUMANS "Demolition War I – III" CD

STUPID HUMANS / THE MENTAL "Pay The Public: EPs & Demos '79 – '80" CD

Aside from being old friends, The Subhumans are one of my favorite bands of all time. Nobody ever notices it. But much of what I do in the punk rock world is heavily influenced by the Subhumans and Bluurg Records. It's true. The reason I started releasing live J Church CDRs is because I love getting those Xeroxed lists of Bluurg tapes with Subhumans records or

when you wrote to Dick.

So, it's no shock that I'm really happy that many of those cassette releases are now coming out as mail-order only items through Bluurg on CDR. Here is a rundown of the three of the best titles, as they are Subs related.

The first Subhumans reunion show I saw was in London with Zounds and the System. I could not believe how powerful and immediate they sounded. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised as three of the four members have been playing in Citizen Fish for past however many years. This recording was made a little after that first show and it's fucking storming! The recording is really pretty good and in-your-face considering I'm guessing it wasn't even a board recording. It just sounds fucking great. There are 26 songs on this CD and most of the hits (short of "Cradle to the Grave") are here. "All Gone Dead", "Rats", "Where's The Freedom" and "Reality Is Waiting For A Bus" all sound fucking great. This CD is a benefit for something called the Alternative Euro Tournament, which has got something to do with an alternative football league.

On the opposite end of the Subhumans timeline is "Demolition War I – III". Collecting the band's first three demo tapes, the CD is also a documentation of a pre-Trotsky line-up. Unlike most demo recordings, the first Demolition War is recorded live at a pub in their home-town of Warminster. Having spent a little time there and having even played a gig there, it's really sort of hard for me to imagine that such a sophisticated band would come from such a tiny rural town. Maybe that's why they're all so well-adjusted. All three of the demo tapes were recorded over a four-month period and even the non-live stuff has a very similar live feel as they were recorded to reel-to-reel 2 track. The recordings are raw and the drumming sort of

lacks the character that Trotsky brought. But it's great lo-fi punk like you would expect from some of the best Killed By Death recordings. I would swear that Dick's voice seems like it's a full octave higher. So over the course of the 24 track CD you get some amazing versions of "All Gone Dead", "Germ", "It's Gonna Get Worse", "Nothing I Can Do" and a crazy, hugely distorted version of "Mickey Mouse Is Dead".

Finally, there's the pre-history. "Pay The Public" is a split CD between The Mental (Dick's previous band) and Stupid Humans (Bruce and Andy's pre-Subs band). The first four tracks are from the super hard to find "Extended Play" 7" from The Mental. It's crazy, noisy, and surprisingly catchy punk rock. The remaining four songs from The Mental are from their never released "Shoot The Hostages" EP. More greatness that is pretty removed from the Subhumans with the exception of the uncanny vocal stylings. The later songs may even be more raw. It's like they just threw up a couple of mics in a practice space. Sounds great, though. Stupid Humans are much more like a slower version of the Subhumans. Make no mistake, there's still a lot of energy. But in 1979 "fast" just wasn't as "fast" as 1981. Very, very different versions of "Ashtray Dirt" and "First Aid" and some interesting, more straightforward versions of "Get Out Of My Way", "All Gone Dead" and "New Age". The final three tracks are from a pretty good sounding recording that could have been a single easy.

Maybe I'm a bit of a fan and I do have a personal connection to a lot of these folks. But I can't imagine not being excited about this music even this far down the line. Listening to this really makes me wanna start from scratch and write a whole album of Wire meets Pere Ubu type stuff. Maybe that's not a bad idea.

(Bluurg Records – bluurg@onetel.net.uk)

## T

### THIS IS MY FIST! "I Don't Want To Startle You..." 7"

Mike Thorn made me buy this record a while back and I'm really glad he did. Little Will has a new band and this one is fucking great. Four super punchy punker tunes that are catchy and fast and expand on a format that I thought was sort of dead: East Bay Punk. As a lifelong West Bayer, I've always been a little cynical of any scene that sprung up around either Gilman Street or that West Oakland Warehouse community. But despite my carefully developed prejudices (the East Bay does kind of suck) I do find that I like a lot of the bands from there and secret alliance often existed.

This Is My Fist is another example of a band that seemed silly until I finally listened to them. These songs are great. The band can play. They can write. That girl can really sing. I mean, it seems like it would be fun to be in this band. The melodies are infectious and the lyrics would make any Pinhead Gunpowder enthusiast sit up and take note. They should really be the next big thing in DIY punk. But the world sucks and probably the next big thing will involve a fucking MOOG or Pedal Steel or some other dated shit.  
(Off The Dial, PO Box 3941, Oakland, CA 94609)

## V

### V/A "Post Punk Vol 01" 2xCD

It cracks me up that this fantastic collection starts off with the folks from Rough Trade announcing their displeasure with the title of the CD set and an explanation that sounds more like an apology.

So this is the shit. This is a really fantastic compilation. 44 songs with almost everyone perfect. Of course, even with that you can't have a complete compilation of post punk. Hopefully the Vol 01 is an indication that there is more to come.

There's a lot of great stuff and it's excellent music for riding the bus to work. It sort of helps you assess every urban situation that otherwise adds to my anxiety and frustration. It's like a 100 Harvey

Pekar's starting bands just for you.

I should list some of the most enticing highlights like Gang of Four, the Pop Group, Liliput, Delta 5, the Slits, Pigbag, ESG, Swell Maps, Au Pairs, Pil, UK Decay, Scritti Politii, Wire, Bush Tetras, DNA, James White and the Blacks, World Domination Enterprises, Magazine, the Raincoats, the Fall, Young Marble Giants, Crispy Ambulance, the Fall, the Modettes, and Essential Logic. All great stuff.

Even the newer material mostly sounds great. There is something odd about bands like the Rapture, the Roger Sisters and Erase Errata. I do quite like them all. But in a weird way it seems like American bands taking British music and selling it back to England. I guess I like the Dead Boys though they really seemed to be selling London a second-rate version of the Damned.

Still, two solid discs that I just can't stop listening too. Looking forward to a second volume hopefully with the Cravats, something from the first Lounge Lizards record, Big Black and maybe Radio 4. ([www.roughtrade.com](http://www.roughtrade.com))

## W

### WATCHERS "To The Rooftops" CD

Not that funk is the new punk or that punk was ever the new funk, but Gern Blandsten is a label with some vision. Either that or if the Radio 4 axel ain't broken, don't fix it. But that's not fair to Watchers. This ain't no party. This ain't no disco. This ain't no Squat or Rot show.

Seems like anything related to punk rock with a funky vibe gets the Gang of Four toe tag and there are definitely moments where I'm thinking that over these nine songs. But we're not talking about "Entertainment" skronk. This is more along the lines of the criminally underrated Songs of the Free. In fact, rather than taking the easy way out and diving for the Pop Group / Au Pairs brass ring as sublimated by the likes of so many so-called No Wave revivalists, this in fact reminds me of some of the Style Councils funkier grooves with affectations of, and this is a compliment, A Certain Ratio.

Now they're also apparently James Chance's backing band. It looks like the promise of Trenchmouth and other pathfinders has reached fruition.

([www.gernblandsten.com](http://www.gernblandsten.com))

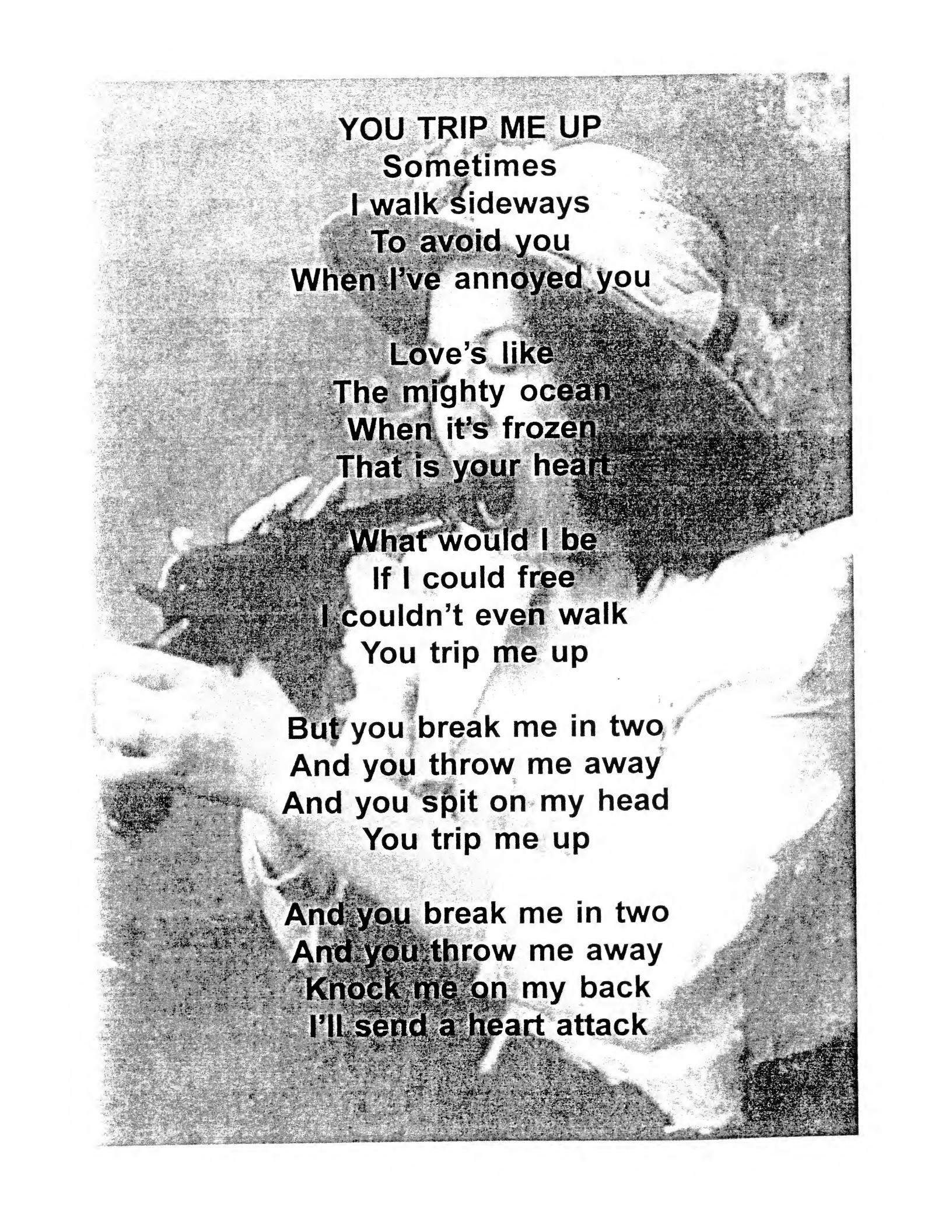
### WINKS, THE 7"

Debut four song EP from local girly-girls and it's even better than I was expecting. We played with them not too long ago and I really dug 'em. Lots of energy. Catchy tunes. Attitude o' plenty. So, when a local band you like goes in to record for the first time, you always brace yourself for the worst. They don't know what they're doing so how can you expect them to reproduce what they do while high on adrenaline (and whatever)?

It's not a perfect record. But that's okay. They get a lot of that live energy in the proverbial bottle and there's some skill to not over-thinking a recording. I mean, it's not a practice tape. But it still sounds like a bunch of mics quickly thrown up in exactly the right spots in a small, intimate room.

But this record is a shooting star sailing through the night sky for only those of us who are lucky enough to know to look for it. A lot of people are going to miss out on this record and that's just the nature of this kind of music. It's fleeting which makes it more likely to leave an impression. I used to think that sounded sad. But in this age of bands taking way too much time to say very little, I think it's a lot more "real".

([www.supersecretrecords.com](http://www.supersecretrecords.com))



**YOU TRIP ME UP**  
Sometimes  
I walk sideways  
To avoid you  
When I've annoyed you

Love's like  
The mighty ocean  
When it's frozen  
That is your heart

What would I be  
If I could free  
I couldn't even walk  
You trip me up

But you break me in two  
And you throw me away  
And you spit on my head  
You trip me up

And you break me in two  
And you throw me away  
Knock me on my back  
I'll send a heart attack

SOME HOPE AND SOME DESPAIR - [www.honeybearrecords.net](http://www.honeybearrecords.net) - honeybearrecords@hotmail.com

# OPERATION Halloween CRINGER SPOOKS

SUN MARCH 20TH 4:00 PM ADMISSION \$3.00

CARPOOL OR WALK IF POSSIBLE

NO ALCOHOL, ON OR AROUND PREMISES

TM GONZALES '88